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ABSTRACT

This report describes a program for increasing reading fluency through the implementation of leveled books. The elementary students of the three targeted regular education classes exhibit low fluency rates which impedes them from becoming independent readers. Evidence for the existence of the problem includes words read per minute on a grade level reading passage, teacher observation, anecdotal records, previous report cards, and attitude surveys administered periodically throughout the school year. Analysis of probable cause data reveals that reading fluency can be broken down into three categories: Independent Level, Instructional Level, and Frustration Level at the beginning of the study. Students demonstrated frustration in reading, which resulted in low fluency scores. A review of solution strategies suggested by experts in the field combined with the analysis of the problem setting, resulted in the choice to implement a leveled classroom library while instructing students and parents on how to select a book at each child's Independent Level. Various components including the use of a reading readiness test, leveled books, sight words, repeated readings, and several word pattern strategies were implemented to improve the individual reading fluency of the targeted elementary students. Post intervention data indicated an increase in student reading fluency scores, student understanding of how to choose an appropriate book to read independently, and an increase in student silent reading time during the school day. Contains 24 references and 21 tables of data. Appendixes contain survey instruments, inventories, and tests. (Author/RS)

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ED 452 520

INCREASING STUDENT READING FLUENCY THROUGH THE USE OF LEVELED BOOKS

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Requirements for the Degree of Master of Arts in Teaching and Leadership

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Field-Based Masters Program

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Analysis of probable cause data reveals that reading fluency can be broken down into three categories: Independent Level, Instructional Level, and Frustration Level at the beginning of the study. Students demonstrated frustration in reading, which resulted in low fluency scores.

A review of solution strategies suggested by experts in the field combined with the analysis of the problem setting, resulted in the choice to implement a leveled classroom library while instructing students and parents on how to select a book at each child's Independent Level. Various components including the use of a reading readiness test, leveled books, sight words, repeated readings, and several word pattern strategies were implemented to improve the individual reading fluency of the targeted elementary students.

Post intervention data indicated an increase in student reading fluency scores, student understanding of how to choose an appropriate book to read independently, and an increase in student silent reading time during the school day.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER 1 – PROBLEM STATEMENT AND CONTEXT....1
General Statement of the Problem....1
Description of Immediate Problem Setting....1
Comparison of Sites....1
National Context of the Problem....10
CHAPTER 2 – PROBLEM DOCUMENTATION....15
Problem Evidence....15
Probable Causes....29
CHAPTER 3 – THE SOLUTION STRATEGY....32
Literature Review....32
Project Objectives and Processes....46
Project Action Plan....47
Methods of Assessment....49
CHAPTER 4 – PROJECT RESULTS....50
Historical Description of the Intervention....50
Presentation and Analysis of Results....56
Conclusions and Recommendations....63
REFERENCES....67
APPENDICIES....69

CHAPTER ONE

PROBLEM STATEMENT AND CONTEXT

General Statement of the Problem

Students in the targeted primary classrooms (K-3) are not meeting fluency expectations, which interfere with reading achievement. Evidence for the existence of the problem includes words read per minute on a grade level reading passage, teacher observation, and anecdotal records.

Description of Immediate Problem Setting

This project will target three elementary schools in a district within a suburban community located about thirty miles northwest of a major metropolitan city in the Midwest. The specific classes involved include a primary second/third multiage classroom (Site A), a primary first/second grade multiage classroom (Site B), and a primary kindergarten/first grade multiage classroom (Site C).

Comparison of Sites

Site A was a medium sized elementary school housing grades pre-kindergarten through fifth grade. The school was one of nine elementary schools in the district. The school was built in 1971. The building had two levels. The upper level housed second grade through fifth grade. The lower level housed pre-kindergarten through first grade. In 1996 an addition was completed consisting of a new entrance, nurse's office,

principal's office, conference room, a new front office and a 3,000 square foot multi-purpose room. The multi-purpose room also doubled as a lunchroom during the noon hour. At the time of the addition, the library media center and teacher's lounge/workroom were remodeled.

At the time of this study, the enrollment of the school was about 560 students. This included six pre-kindergarten classes, a kindergarten self-contained learning disabled class, and a first-second grade self-contained learning-disabled class that served students from the entire district. The district students were all bussed to the school, unless the school was the student's home school. The racial/ethnic make up of the school was 75.6% White, 2.3% Black, 12.6% Hispanic, 9.1% Asian/Pacific Islander. The percentage of students considered low income was 3.4%. These were students from families receiving public aid, being supported in foster homes, or eligible to receive free or reduced-price lunches. The Limited-English Proficient population was 0.9%. The school's attendance rate was reported as 96.5%. The mobility rate of students moving into or from the district was 8.5%, and there was no chronic truancy reported.

The percentage of students who had an IEP (Individual Education Plan) and received special education services was 17.7%. Reading Corps tutors assisted the classroom teacher in providing reading support for students who needed additional reading strategies. Grades one through five had a Discovery Science Program for one half-day six times during the school year. This was a hands on science program taught by the district's Science Department.

Site A participated in a Dimensions Program (a pull-out program for students of high academic achievement). Students identified by the classroom teacher were provided with additional enrichment activities.

The total of full and part time staff consisted of 61 members. The school's staff consisted of a principal, a full-time health assistant, (someone who helped deal with school health issues on a daily basis. The individual was not a registered nurse.) a full-time secretary, a full-time social worker, two full-time learning disability resource teachers, a full-time gym teacher, a full-time computer specialist, a full-time literacy facilitator, a full-time instructional media specialist, a full-time learning center assistant, a part-time music teacher, a part-time art teacher, four full-time speech/language pathologists, a physical therapist, an occupational therapist, six pre-kindergarten teachers, six pre-kindergarten assistants, a special education kindergarten teacher, a special education kindergarten assistant, a kindergarten teacher, a kindergarten/first grade multiage teacher, two first grade teachers, a special education first/second grade teacher, two second grade teachers, two second/third grade multiage teachers, two third grade teachers, two fourth grade teachers, three fourth/fifth grade multiage teachers, and two fifth grade teachers. There was also a registered nurse and a psychologist who were shared with three other schools in the district. Music teachers shared with three other schools provided orchestra and band instruction to fourth and fifth graders. At Site A the average teaching experience was 18 years with 19% holding a Bachelors Degree, 76% of teachers holding a Masters Degree, and 5% holding a Doctorate. A Building Council existed and was made up of teacher volunteers and the

principal. The Council's purpose was to provide consensus decision-making in matters of school concern within the educational process.

The children had many opportunities to participate in extra-curricular activities. These included student council, computer club, intramurals, enrichment programs, 600-minute reading club, chorus, talent show, ice cream social, scouting programs, Junior Great Book Programs, D.A.R.E. (Drug Awareness Resistance Education - fifth grade) and other PTO sponsored events. Every year a children's author visited the school. The PTO provided six cultural arts programs throughout the year.

Site B was a medium sized elementary school housing grades kindergarten through fifth grade. The school was one of nine elementary schools in the district. The school was built in 1969. The building had two levels. The upper level housed grades three through five and the lower level housed kindergarten through second grade. In 1994 a gym was added onto the building and the previous gym was remodeled into a learning media center.

At the time of this study the enrollment of the school was about 443 students. Some children walked, parents drove some and some took a bus. The kindergarten through fifth grade students came from the neighborhood surrounding the school. In addition, the school housed two district programs, an LD/BD self-contained classroom of children in grades three through five and a K-5 ESL Program (English as a second language). These students were all bussed to the school, unless the school was the student's home school. The racial/ethnic make up of the school in 1999 was reported as 80.8% White, 0.9% Black, 1.1% Hispanic, and 17.2% Asian/Pacific Islander. No report of Native Americans was indicated at the time of this report. The percentage of

students considered low income was 12.6%. These were students from families receiving public aid, being supported in foster homes or eligible to receive free or reduced-priced lunches. The Limited-English proficient population was 24.2%. The school's attendance rate was reported as 96.3%. The mobility rate on students moving in and out of the district was 13.4%. There was no indicated report of chronic truancy.

The percentage of students who had an IEP (Individualized Education Plan) and received special education services was 11.1% . Reading Corps Tutors in grades one and two assisted the classroom teacher in providing reading support for students who needed additional reading strategies. Grades one through five had a Discovery Science Program for one half-day six times during the school year. This was a hands on science program taught by the district's science department. Site B participated in a Dimensions Program (a pull-out program for students of high academic achievement). Students identified by the classroom teacher were provided with additional enrichment activities. The total amount of full and part-time staff consisted of 38 members. Site B's school staff consisted of a principal, a full-time health assistant, (someone who helped deal with school health issues on a daily basis. The individual was not a registered nurse.) a full-time secretary, a part-time social worker, two full-time and one part-time learning disability resource teachers, one full-time self-contained LD/BD teacher who had one full-time assistant, a full-time gym teacher, a full-time music teacher, two half-time computer specialists who shared a single position, a literacy facilitator, a full-time instructional media specialist, a learning center assistant, a part-time art teacher, a part-time speech/language pathologist, a kindergarten teacher, an ESL kindergarten teacher, a first grade teacher, an ESL first grade teacher, two first /second grade

multiage teachers, a first/second grade ESL multiage teacher, a second grade teacher, a second/third ESL multiage teacher, two third grade teachers, a third/fourth multiage teacher, a fourth grade teacher, a fourth/fifth multiage teacher, a fourth/fifth multiage ESL teacher, and two fifth grade teachers. There was also a registered nurse and a psychologist who were shared with three other schools in the district. Music teachers shared with three other schools provided orchestra and band instruction to fourth and fifth graders. At Site B the average teaching experience was 14.4 years with 34.3% holding a Bachelors Degree, and 65.7% holding a Masters Degree or higher. A Building Council existed which was made up of teacher volunteers and the principal. The council's purpose was to provide consensus decision-making in matters of school concerns within the educational process.

The children at Site B had many opportunities to participate in extra-curricular activities. These included student council, intramurals, school newspaper, enrichment programs, technology club, 600-minute reading club, chorus, talent show, ice cream social, scouting programs and other various PTO sponsored events. Other programs offered included D.A.R.E. (Drug Awareness Resistance Education - 5th grade) and Officer Friendly (kindergarten through 3rd grades).

Site C was a medium sized elementary school housing grades kindergarten through fifth grade. The school was one of nine elementary schools in the district. The school was built in 1964. The building had three levels. The ground level housed grades kindergarten, first grade, and first grade bilingual. The lower level housed grades third through fifth. The upper level housed the kindergarten/first multiage classes, second grade, and the second/third multiage classes. In 1995 the school was

remodeled and an addition to the school was completed. The addition consisted of a new wing of three classrooms, two washrooms, a new entrance, a new front office, a nurse's office, a principal's office, a conference room, a teacher's lounge, and two additional offices for staff.

The enrollment of the school in 1999/2000 was approximately 634 students. At the time of this report the racial/ethnic make up of the school was 46.1% White, 4.4% Black, 41.5% Hispanic, 8.0% Asian/Pacific Islander, There was no percentage of Native American students reported. The percentage of students considered low income was 41.5%. These are students from families receiving public aid, being supported in foster homes, or eligible to receive free or reduced-price lunches. The students considered Limited-English proficient made up 29% of the total enrollment of 634. The school's daily attendance rate was reported as 95.7%, the mobility rate of students moving from the district was 16.7%. There was no chronic truancy reported.

There were 18.4% of students who had an IEP (Individual Education Plan) and received special education services. At Site C, Reading Corps tutors were employed to assist the first and second grade classroom teachers in providing reading support for the students who needed additional reading strategies. Grades one through five had a Discovery Science Program for one half-day six times during the school year. This was a hands on science program taught by the district's Science Department. Site C participated in a Dimensions Program (a pull-out program for students of high academic achievement). Students identified by the classroom teacher were provided with additional enrichment activities.

At the time of this study there were 52 staff members employed at Site C. The school's staff consisted of one principal, one full-time health assistant, (someone who helped deal with school health issues on a daily basis. This individual was not a registered nurse.) one full-time secretary, one full-time social worker, two full-time learning disability resource teachers, one full-time gym teacher, one full-time learning center specialist, one full-time music teacher, one full-time computer specialist, one full-time speech/language pathologist, one full- time Title 1 teacher, two part-time literacy facilitators, one kindergarten teacher, three K-1 multiage teachers, one of which was a bilingual teacher, three first grade teachers, one of which was a bilingual teacher, five second/third multiage teachers, two of which were bilingual, two third grade teachers, two fourth grade teachers, five fourth/fifth multiage teachers, one of which was a bilingual teacher, two fifth grade teachers, one third/fourth/ fifth grade bilingual self-contained teacher, two reading lab teachers, and eight part-time Reading Corps tutors who provided assistance to at-risk first grade and second grade students. There was also a registered nurse and a psychologist who were shared between other schools in the district. Band and orchestra instructors serviced interested fourth and fifth graders and were shared with three other schools. At Site C the average teaching experience was 13.6% years with 62% of teachers holding a Masters Degree, 29% holding a Bachelors and 9% with no specified degree. This site had a Building Council, which involved teacher volunteers and the principal. The council's purpose was to provide consensus decision-making in matters of school concern within the educational process.

The students had many opportunities to participate in extracurricular activities. These activities included student council, computer club, exploration club, intramurals, enrichment programs, 600 minute reading club, chorus, talent show, Junior Great Books, D.A.R.E. (Drug Awareness Resistance Education- fifth grade), Officer Friendly (kindergarten through third grade) and other PTO sponsored events.

Description of Surrounding Community

This district, covering 8.5 square miles was approximately 35 miles from a major metropolitan area. The commuter system linked this community to the major urban area. The district encompassed four suburban towns, which consolidated into one district. This district had twelve schools nine of which were elementary and three were middle schools. The three middle schools fed into the district's two high schools. The district community had a median income of $39, 848 and had 12, 495 households. (1990 census of Population and Housing) In this district 65.1% of the population was White, 6.9% was Asian or Pacific Islander, 2.9% was Black and 25.1% was Hispanic. There was no reported percentage of Native Americans. Within the district 27% of the population was considered low income. Of the residents within the district, 18.6% were of Limited English Proficiency. The housing within the targeted area consisted of apartments, condominiums, moderately priced homes and small sub-divisions of homes costing over $200,000.

The district community had a large, active park district offering many educational, recreational and sporting programs for children and adults. In addition to neighborhood parks and ball fields, the community also had a recreation/aquatic center, which was built seven years ago.

Sites A and B drew students from the same demographic area. The population of the community surrounding these sites was 76,702. The median income was $74,782 and the median home value for Sites A and B was $205,000. The surrounding neighborhoods of Sites A and B were well kept and the local park district was known for its excellence. It was the local park district that ran the before and after school day care within the school setting of Sites A and B.

Site C drew students from a demographic area approximately two miles from Sites A and B. Although they were close in proximity, Site C was located in a neighboring town approximately 2 miles northeast of sites A and B. The estimated population of the surrounding community of Site C was 31,253. The median income was estimated at $58,802 and the estimated average home value was $168,611. Of the 12,468 households, 8,055 own their own home and 4,413 rent their place of residence. The local park district ran the before and after school day care program at Site C.

National Context Of The Problem

The problem of student reading fluency is of great concern at the state and national level.

> Johns and Lenski quoted Samuels (1994) stating reading fluency is the ability to read text in a normal speaking voice with appropriate intonation and inflection. Students who read fluently have developed automaticity. Automaticity means that students do not have to devote

> their attention to the task of decoding words; they can focus on constructing the meaning of what they are reading (Johns & Lenski, 1994, p. 107).

Furthermore, Johns & Lenski (1994, p. 107) state that good readers do not have to spend time sounding out words, they read without much thought about how they are reading. In a primary classroom there are three levels of reading: the Independent Level, Instructional Level and Frustration Level. Texts are matched to students according to their level of independent reading. Fountas and Pinnell state that texts can be divided into three separate categories, Easy Texts, Just Right Texts, and Hard Texts.

> Easy reading is actually beneficial for young readers, just as it is for adults. Reading a book that is very easy for you requires less intensity and energy. You meet few problems in terms of words and you understand the text with little effort. (Fountas & Pinnell, 1999, p. 2)

In order to help students advance from the easy text to the just right text, teachers need to help the students expand their skills and provide a mixture of support and challenge.

> Reading at the just right level involves knowing or solving most of the words quickly with a high level of accuracy (above 90 percent). Also, students at this level will use their knowledge of what makes sense, sounds right, and looks right -simultaneously - in a smoothly operating system. If beginning readers are placed into hard texts,

> they are unable to use what they know in efficient, strategic ways. Forcing young readers to read too-hard text has devastating results: Children begin to think that reading is simply a matter of saying one individual word after another. Their reading may, in fact, sound like the laborious reading of a list of isolated words. Children lose the meaning of the text and may conclude that reading doesn't have to make sense. Children reading hard texts become frustrated with reading and avoid it altogether (Fountas & Pinnell, 1999, p. 2-3).

Struggling readers, read word-for-word and are not focused on constructing meaning. Related to fluency, students who consistently read at a frustration level, a level that includes books that are too hard for them, will not be able to construct meaning from the text (Routman, 1991). If children could work on literacy tasks most of the time at a level of success, we would have solved the biggest problem in learning to read and write (Fountas & Pinnell, 1996, p. 117). Part of the problem that exists is that children too often choose reading material that is at an inappropriate difficulty level because they have not been appropriately taught how to choose a book at their own level.

> Often struggling readers are perceived as not being able to read anything. It may be that they have been forced to read at a frustration level for as long as a year or two, and that they have lost their initial reading skills. Children can go backwards later in their schooling, reading worse than they did at seven years. Such

> children may need individual teaching in order to redevelop an independent attack on books (Clay, 1979b, p. 4).

According to PLUS (Project Literacy US, 1987) more than 23,000,000 Americans cannot read and write sufficiently. Our schools are turning out functional literates, children who can read and write in school, but who do not necessarily read and write in other contexts (Routman, 1988, p.15). Because of this alarming statistic a sustained effort must be put into practice to improve reading and writing skills. Another important study comes from the Institute for Academic Excellence. The study indicates that lack of reading practice is a major cause of low reading standards (Patterns of Reading Practice, 1996).

> One of the educational myths in this country is that students are not learning to read. The book that created the myth was Why Johnny Can't Read with its sequel, Why Johnny Still Can't Read. Actually, there are very few Johnnys, Susans and Sams that don't read at all. We teach kids how to read, but we don't do a good job of helping kids learn to read well. Too many kids are reading two and three years below grade level, far below their potential. Reading well is the principal reading problem, not learning the mechanics of reading. While educators argue about what works best to teach reading - look say, whole word, phonics, and the like - they often ignore the more critical process of acquiring reading automaticity, the skill of reading well, reading fluently with comprehension (Paul, 1996, p. 8).

Getting children to a fluent automatic stage of decoding is a major challenge in primary classrooms. Teachers should know that it is crucial to provide extensive practice with reading easy stories (Shefelbine, 1996, p. 60). Students need to be reading at their independent reading level. Routman (1991) states, which independent level means that students recognize 95 percent of the words used in a selection and comprehend 90 percent of the content. She further states, reading lots of books at this level promotes comprehension, vocabulary development, and fluency.

The goal for all primary classroom teachers is to have students become lifelong literacy learners. By promoting appropriate selection of literature to the students, the hope is that students will be able to choose books that best fit their reading level. If the students consistently choose and read books that are appropriate to their level, their fluency should increase and the goal to become lifelong literacy learners can be achieved.

CHAPTER TWO

PROBLEM DOCUMENTATON

Problem Evidence

In order to document the extent of the problem to which students were able to read fluently, the teachers reviewed current teacher observations, an elementary reading attitude survey, parent survey, and CBM (Curriculum Based Measurement) results. The Curriculum Based Measurements included a sight word recognition list, a spelling inventory, and a timed fluency passage.

Teacher Observations

In the spring of 2000, the teachers of the three targeted classrooms discussed reading practices used in their classrooms. These teachers expressed concerns about students who continued to struggle with reading. The teachers at Sites A and B observed low fluency scores among their current students. These students appeared to be frustrated with the reading process and therefore those students were not choosing to read as an independent activity. The targeted students at Site C were non-reading kindergartners and were not given a fluency score in the spring of 2000. However, the results of Curriculum Based Measurement at the kindergarten level exhibited a lack of phonemic awareness. Due to the fact that these teachers had multiage classrooms and had the students for two years, they realized that current reading practices were not

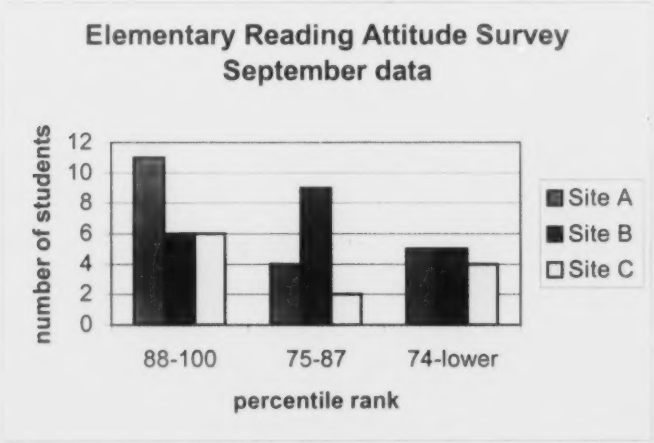
meeting the needs of all students. Thus, it was agreed upon by the multiage teachers at Sites A, B, and C, that a revised reading program should be created to improve the success of all students in reading fluency.

Elementary Reading Attitude Survey

In his book, Flexible Grouping in Reading, Michael F. Opitz (1998, p.14) stated, "Attitude has a big impact on the ability to read a text. Identifying attitudes will help me see if I need to help a child develop a more positive approach, thereby making reading a more enjoyable experience. Children with a positive attitude are more likely to attempt reading for a variety of purposes." This positive attitude should be helpful in teaching and implementing new and different reading strategies in the classroom.

To determine the exact scope of the problem the teachers at Sites A, B and C created an Elementary Reading Attitude Survey that was administered to all targeted students. (Appendix A) The purpose of the survey was to enable the teachers at Sites A, B, and C to gain a better understanding of the reading attitude levels of their students in two specific areas: academic reading and reading for enjoyment.

Table 1 Results of Elementary Reading Attitude Survey



At Site A, 11 students showed a very positive interest toward reading, four students showed a moderate interest in reading, and five students showed a lower interest in reading. At Site B, six students showed a very positive interest toward reading, nine students showed a moderate interest in reading, and five students showed a lower interest in reading. At Site C, six students showed a very positive interest toward reading, two students showed a moderate interest in reading, and four students showed a lower interest in reading. Results of this survey helped the teachers to see how students were alike and different in their attitudes toward reading. The teachers concluded from the results of the survey that the majority of the students appeared to have a positive attitude toward reading.

Parent Survey

> Kearns' study (as cited in Johns and Lenski,1997) found students who stay in school from kindergarten through twelfth grade will have spent only 9% of their time in school (1993). That leaves an astounding 91% of time out of school; therefore, parents are responsible for a great deal of their children's education. Clearly, schools and parents need to work together to foster continuity in the lives of children (Johns and Lenski, 1997, p.465).

In September 2000, the teachers at Sites A, B, and C created and administered a reading attitude survey to the parents of the targeted students. (Appendix B) The purpose of the survey was to enable the teachers to better understand the reading practices that take place at home. There were three types of questions that the parents were asked related to reading. One question was about their opinion of their child's

attitude toward reading, another question pertained to their personal attitude toward reading, and the final question inquired about their involvement in providing reading practices at home. The information below gives results taken from the parent survey administered at Sites A, B, and C.

Table 2 Results of Parent Surveys at Sites A, B, and C

Site	Surveys issued	Surveys returned
A	20	19
B	20	19
C	12	12

The findings from the first question on the parent survey, "Do you read to your child?" are presented in Table 3.

Table 3 Parent Response To Survey Question One

Site	Yes	No
A	100%	0%
B	95%	5%
C	100%	0%

At Sites A and C, 100% of the parents stated that they read to their child, while at Site B, 95% of the parents stated that they read to their child.

The findings from the second question on the parent survey, "How many times in a week do you read to your child?" are presented in Table 4.

Table 4 Parent Response to Survey Question Two:

Site	0-2	3-5	6-7
A	26%	53%	21%
B	26%	21%	53%
C	0%	66%	34%

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At Site A, 26% of the parents stated that they read to their child a maximum of two times per week, 53% stated they read to their child between three to five times per week, and 21% stated that they read six to seven times per week to their child. At Site B, 26% of the parents stated that they read to their child a maximum of two times per week, 21% stated they read to their child three to five times per week, and 53% stated that they read six to seven times per week to their child. At Site C, 0% of the parents stated that they read to their child a maximum of two times per week, 66% stated they read to their child three to five times per week, and 34% stated that they read six to seven times per week to their child.

The findings from the third question on the parent survey, "Does your child have a library card?" are presented in Table 5.

Table 5 Parent Response to Survey Question Three:

Site	Yes	No
A	100%	0%
B	84%	16%
C	75%	25%

At Site A, 100% of the parents stated that their child had a library card. At Site B, 84% of the parents stated that their child had a library card. At Site C, 75% of the parents stated that their child had a library card.

The findings from the fourth question on the parent survey, "How often do you go to the library with your child?" are presented in Table 6.

Table 6 Parent Response to Survey Question Four:

Site	Weekly	Every 2 wks	Monthly	Not often
A	5%	32%	21%	42%
B	16%	42%	32%	10%
C	8%	17%	50%	25%

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At Site A, 5% of the parents stated that they went to the library weekly with their child, 32% went every two weeks, 21% went monthly, and 42% did not go often. At Site B, 16% of the parents stated that they went to the library weekly with their child, 42% went every two weeks, 32% went monthly, and 10% did not go often. At Site C, 8% of the parents stated that they went to the library weekly with their child, 17% went every two weeks, 50% went monthly, and 25% did not go often. Parents at Site A frequented the library less than the parents at Sites B and C.

The findings from the fifth question on the parent survey, "On a continuum scale of 1 to 5 (5 being the highest) how important is reading to you?" are presented in Table 7.

Table 7 Parent Response to Survey Question Five:

Site	1	2	3	4	5
A	0%	0%	0%	5%	95%
B	0%	0%	5%	11%	84%
C	0%	0%	8%	8%	84%

At Site A, 100% of the parents responded on the high end of the continuum that reading was important to them. At Site B, 95% of the parents responded on the high end of the continuum that reading was important to them, while 5% responded in the middle of the continuum. At Site C, 92% of the parents responded on the high end of the continuum that reading was important to them, while 8% responded in the middle of the continuum.

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The findings from the sixth question on the parent survey, "On a continuum scale of 1 to 5 (5 being the highest) how important is reading to your child?" The findings are presented in Table 8.

Table 8 Parent Response to Survey Question Six:

Site	1	2	3	4	5
A	5%	0%	21%	32%	42%
B	0%	5%	21%	16%	58%
C	0%	0%	0%	25%	75%

At Site A, 5% of the parents stated that reading was of very little importance to their child, 0% of the parents stated that reading was of little importance, 21% of the parents stated that reading was of moderate importance to their child, 32% of the parents stated that reading was important to their child, and 42% of the parents stated that reading was very important to their child. At Site B, 0% of the parents stated that reading was of very little importance to their child, 5% of the parents stated that reading was of little importance, 21% of the parents stated that reading was of moderate importance to their child, 16% of the parents stated that reading was important to their child, and 58% of the parents stated that reading was very important to their child. At Site C, 0% of the parents stated that reading was of very little importance to their child, 0% of the parents stated that reading was of little importance, 0% of the parents stated that reading was of moderate importance to their child, 25% of the parents stated that reading was important to their child, and 75% of the parents stated that reading was very important to their child.

The findings from the seventh question on the parent survey, "Is there any family member/relative that you believe struggles with reading?" are presented in Table 9.

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Table 9 Parent Response to Survey Question Seven:

Site	Yes	No
A	16%	84%
B	26%	74%
C	33%	67%

At Site A, 16% of the parents stated that they believed a family member/relative struggled with reading, while 84% of the parents stated that they did not believe a family member/relative struggled with reading. At Site B, 26% of the parents stated that they believed a family member/relative struggled with reading, while 74% of the parents stated that they did not believe a family member/relative struggled with reading. At Site C, 33% of the parents stated that they believed a family member/relative struggled with reading, while 67% of the parents stated that they did not believe a family member/relative struggled with reading. Overall, the parents did not indicate that a family member/relative struggled with reading.

The findings from the eighth question on the parent survey, "What are your child's strengths in reading and what does your child find to be challenging when reading? " are presented below. The results of this question were random and written in narrative form. Some common comments among the parents appear in Table 10.

Table 10 Parent Response to Survey Question 8

Strengths	Challenges
• Excitement/high interest in reading • Self-motivated to read • Inquisitive about reading • Reading strategies are used	• Sounding out words • Avoidance of long texts • Comprehension skills • Using reading strategies appropriately

The parents at Sites A, B, and C all stated that their children exhibited similar strengths in reading. The parents stated that the students were excited and interested in reading,

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self-motivated to read, and were inquisitive about reading and used reading strategies. The parents at Sites A, B, and C all stated that their children exhibited similar challenges in reading. The parents stated that the students had difficulty sounding out words, comprehending text, using reading strategies appropriately, and reading long passages of text.

Curriculum Based Measurement

Michael F. Opitz, the author of the book, Flexible Grouping In Reading-Practical Ways to Help All Students Become Stronger Readers, reports that teachers need to be masters at observing and assessing every child's reading ability. He indicated that it is only in recognizing students' strengths and weaknesses that teachers can effectively improve reading achievement (Opitz, 1998 p.19). The Curriculum Based Measurement, often referred to as CBM, was a measurement tool selected that identified students' strengths and weaknesses and supports what Michael F. Opitz stated above. A mandated district CBM was administered in September to all first through third grade students at Sites A, B, and C. These reading assessment tests were created by the school district that encompasses Sites A, B, and C, and are grade specific. The teachers at Sites A, B, and C are required to administer these tests three times each school year. However, the teachers of Sites A, B, and C chose to administer the district tests four times throughout the course of this study in order to more accurately chart the progress of the students. The district's reading coordinator created the tests for all district teachers to administer to the students in their classrooms. The purpose of administrating the reading tests was to have a valid and consistent way to assess all students throughout the district. Each test focused on what the students were expected

to achieve by the end of their grade level. The tests are listed below, followed by an explanation of their purpose and the standard to which the students are expected to achieve.

Sight Words Test

The Sight Words Test is a test administered to all students in first through third grades at the district that encompasses Sites A, B, and C. The sight word scores that the students achieved were based on the number of sight words they read correctly in half- second intervals. The words increased in difficulty by grade level. (Appendix C) When the students have met the district standard, they are considered to be performing at their grade level. The district standard for the Sight Words Test for grades first through third is 18 words out of 20 words administered.

Reading Fluency Test

The Oral Reading Fluency Test is a test administered to all students in first through third grades at the district that encompassed Sites A, B, and C. The reading fluency scores that the students achieved were based on the number of words read correctly in a grade level passage during a one minute time period. The reading passage increased in difficulty by grade level. (Appendix D) The district standard increased for each grade level. The district standard for first grade was 55 words read per minute. The district standard for second grade was 65 words read per minute. The district standard for third grade was 85 words read per minute.

Morris Spelling Inventory

The Morris Spelling Inventory (Morris, 1992) is a test administered to first grade students only. Sites B and C administered this test to their first grade students. This test showed the natural progression young students make in their spelling. (Appendix E) The test shows how these young students move from semi-phonetic spelling (consonant only spelling) to phonetic spelling (consonants and one vowel represented) to transitional spelling (spelling word pattern observed). The Morris Spelling score that the students achieved were based on the points they received for the correct usage of consonants and vowels within the 12 words tested. The score was then converted into a stage score by dividing the number of points received by 12. The scores ranged from zero to 5.0. The district standard is 5.0.

Schlagal Spelling Inventory

The Schlagal Spelling Inventory (Schlagal, 1982) was a test administered to all students in second and third grades at the district that encompassed Sites A, B and C. Sites A and B administered this test to their second grade students. The spelling words increased in difficulty by grade level. (Appendix F) The scores the students achieved were based on the amount of words spelled correctly out of 25 words tested. These words reflected specific grade level spelling patterns. The district standard for both second and third grade was 20 words spelled correctly out of 25 total words tested.

Comprehension Test

The Comprehension Test was a test administered to all first through third grade students at the district that encompassed Sites A, B, and C. The test was a multiple-choice format in first grade and a fill in the blank format at both second and third grade. The comprehension passage increased in difficulty by grade level. (Appendix G) The comprehension score that the students achieved were based on the number of correct responses the students answered out of ten responses total. The district standard for the comprehension test for grades first through third was eight out of ten responses.

Table 11 reflects the September CBM scores of the ten second graders in the 2/3 Multiage Classroom at Site A.

Table 11 September CBM Reading Score Summary for 10 Second Graders at Site A

Areas Assessed	Below district standard	At district standard	Above district standard
Sight words	5	1	4
Reading Fluency	6	0	4
Schlagal Spelling	10	0	0
Comprehension	7	0	3

The results on the Sight Words CBM showed five of the ten students were below district standard, one of the ten students was at district standard and four of the ten students were above district standard. The results on the Reading Fluency CBM showed six of the ten students were below district standard, none of the ten students was at district standard, and four of the ten students were above district standard. The results on the Schlagal Spelling CBM showed ten of the ten students were below district standard. The results on the Comprehension CBM showed seven of the ten students

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were below district standard, none of the ten students was at district standard, and three of the ten students were above district standard.

Table 12 reflects the September CBM scores given to ten third graders in the 2/3 Multiage Classroom at Site A.

Table 12 September CBM Reading Score Summary for 10 Third Graders at Site A

Areas Assessed	Below district standard	At district standard	Above district standard
Sight words	3	0	7
Reading Fluency	5	0	5
Schlagal Spelling	7	0	3
Comprehension	5	2	3

The results on the Sight Words CBM showed three of the ten students were below district standard, none of the ten students was at district standard, and seven of the ten students were above district standard. The results on the Reading Fluency CBM showed five of the ten students were below district standard, none of the ten students was at district standard, and the remaining five of the ten were above district standard. The results on the Schlagal Spelling CBM showed seven of the ten students were below district standard, none of the ten students was at district standard, and three of the ten students were above district standard.

Table 13 reflects the September CBM scores given to eleven first graders in the 1/2 Multiage Classroom at Site B.

Table 13 September CBM Reading Score Summary for 11 First Graders at Site B

Areas Assessed	Below district standard	At district standard	Above district standard
Sight words	8	0	3
Reading Fluency	9	0	2
Morris Spelling	11	0	0
Comprehension	10	0	1

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The results on the Sight Words CBM showed eight of the eleven students were below district standard, none of the eleven students was at district standard, and three of the eleven students were above district standard. The results on the Reading Fluency CBM showed nine of the eleven students were below district standard, none of the eleven students was at district standard, and two of the eleven students were above district standard. The results on the Morris Spelling CBM showed eleven of the eleven students were below district standard. The results on the Comprehension CBM showed ten of the eleven students were below district standard, none of the eleven students was at district standard, and one of the eleven students was above district standard. Table14 reflects the September CBM scores given to the nine second graders in the 1/2 Multiage Classroom at Site B.

Table 14 September CBM Reading Score Summary for 9 Second Graders at Site B

Areas Assessed	Below district standard	At district standard	Above district standard
Sight words	4	3	2
Reading Fluency	6	0	3
Schlagal Spelling	9	0	0
Comprehension	6	0	3

The results on the Sight Words CBM showed four of the nine students were below district standard, three of the nine students were at district standard, and two of the nine students were above district standard. The results on the Reading Fluency CBM showed six of the nine students were below district standard, none of the nine students was at district standard, and three of the nine students were above district standard. The results on the Schlagal Spelling CBM showed nine of the nine students were below district standard. The results on the Comprehension CBM showed six of the nine

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students were below district standard, none of the nine students was at district standard, and three of the nine students were above district standard.

Table 15 reflects the September CBM scores given to 13 first graders in the K/1 Multiage Classroom at Site C.

Table 15 September CBM Reading Score Summary for 13 First Graders at Site C

Areas Assessed	Below district standard	At district standard	Above district standard
Sight words	8	1	4
Reading Fluency	8	0	5
Morris Spelling	13	0	0
Comprehension	9	0	4

The results on the Sight Words CBM showed 8 of the13 students were below district standard, 1 of the13 students was at district standard, and 4 of the 13 students were above district standard. The results on the Reading Fluency CBM showed 8 of the 13 students were below district standard, none of the 13 students was at district standard, and 5 of the 13 students were above district standard. The results on the Morris Spelling CBM showed 13 of the13 students were below district standard. The results on the Comprehension CBM showed 9 of the 13 students were below district standard, none of the 13 students was at district standard, and 4 of the13students were above district standard.

Probable Causes

Literature suggests, as reported earlier by Kearns (as cited in Johns and Lenski, 1997 p. 465) that:

> Students who stay in school from kindergarten through twelfth grade will have spent only 9% of their time in school. That leaves an astounding 91% of time out

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of school; therefore, parents are responsible for a great deal of their children's education.

Besides the fact that a significant amount of time is spent outside of school engaging in other non-academic related activities, lack of parental support and involvement, and diverse reading levels due to multiage classrooms are also contributing factors to low fluency scores observed in primary students.

Non-Academic Related Activities

In today's fast-paced society, a greater number of parents are working full time outside of the home. Also, extra-curricular activities such as, park district sports, dance, karate, after school daycare and other obligations contribute to less time reading at home. These factors, combined with the amount of time spent watching television, talking on the telephone, playing video games, and surfing the Internet, leave little time to spend reading and strengthening academic skills.

Lack of Parental Support and Involvement

An unfortunate common thought by many parents today is the feeling that all they need to do is place their children in the school environment and then learning will become automatic. Also, the makeup of the family unit is everchanging. In some family units both parents work full time, some are single parents working full time, while other family units do not have parents as the primary caregivers. Because of the many hours parents must spend working in and out of the home there is little time left in each day to spend supporting their child's academic needs. This did not seem to be evident according to the parent surveys administered at Sites A, B, and C. The parents at all three sites were supportive of their child's reading practices at home. The problem of

low fluency could be attributed to lack of understanding on the importance of providing reading material that is at an appropriate level for their child. Challenging reading material that is too difficult may have an adverse effect on reading fluency. By forcing young, struggling readers to read challenging and difficult text, parents may actually be hindering their child's reading growth.

Diverse Reading Levels Due to Multiage Classrooms

A traditional classroom has many diverse reading levels, while a multiage classroom has twice as many reading levels. In the past, the foundation for reading in the classroom was the basal reader. All children read the same story, at the same time, on the same day. The challenge was using the basal to reach the needs of each student at all times. The text that the basal was made up of did not support and challenge all students. For some students the text was too demanding, and for others not challenging enough. When children were not challenged in reading they became bored and apathetic. When children were struggling in reading they became frustrated and disinterested. This did not seem to be evident according to the Elementary Reading Attitude survey administered to students at Sites A, B, and C.

CHAPTER THREE

THE SOLUTION STRATEGY

Literature Review

Lack of fluency is a characteristic of a poor reader; however, it is often ignored and assumed that fluency will increase on its own. Consequently, children who continue to struggle with fluency become more frustrated and disinterested in reading. Reading is the key to success in all academic areas and everyday life. Without proper guidance and support from teachers and parents alike, the increased literacy demands on children in today's society will only result in the perception of failure of educators to teach our children to read.

In the United States the percentage of students with reading difficulties is of serious concern. Almost everyday we open a newspaper or hear a news broadcast that decries the current standards of literacy in the United States. In 1998 the US Department of Education's Office of Educational Research and Improvement provided some dismal news about literacy in its 1998 National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) Reading Report Card. This report is issued every four years and portrays nationwide student achievement in reading at grades four, eight, and twelve. The NAEP reading assessment

measures the reading comprehension of students. In addition to assessing their ability to understand the three purposes of reading (for literacy experience, to gain information, and to perform a task), it also assesses the four different approaches readers take in trying to comprehend what is read. These responses include: forming an initial understanding of the text, developing an interpretation of the text, personally responding to the text, and taking a critical stance. Although the 1998 average reading score was higher than the 1992 score at the eighth grade level, there was no net gain seen over the 1992 average scores for students in fourth and twelfth grades. While these scores are alarming, there is even more cause for concern when we look at these data in relation to their impact on academic performance in school. The NAEP performance achievement levels are reported in three categories: Basic, Proficient, and Advanced. The Proficient Level represents an ability to show solid academic performance and is the level of achievement identified as a standard that all students should reach. Students who achieve this level are considered competent enough to read challenging subject matter, apply the knowledge gained to real-world situations, and use analytical skills appropriate to the subject matter (Office of Educational Research and Improvement, US Department of Education 1998). Unfortunately, the 1998 NAEP report reveals that only 31 percent of fourth grade students; 33 percent of eighth grade students; and 40 percent of twelfth grade students achieved this level. Given this information, many observers cannot help but wonder if we are headed for an Age of Illiteracy. Since the NAEP report describes changes in student achievement as measured

> through the long-term assessment in reading, we have reason for concern. The 1998 NAEP report findings indicate that almost 70 percent of fourth and eighth grade students and 60 percent of twelfth grade students will not effectively function in college or in the work setting in the future. They may not be able to read and understand test directions, instructions for operating machinery, office memos, and tax forms. In addition, because of their inability to read, they may not know how to gain access to that information. As a result, many fear that the unemployment rate might rise, forcing young people into low-paying jobs and necessitating remedial programs (Sejnost and Thiese, 2001 p.5-6).

Fluency has been defined as the ability to read at a natural rate combining automaticity with accuracy (Allington 1983, Samuels, 1979). Students develop automaticity when they attempt to decode text. Their research has also supported the fact that there is a correlation between reading fluency and reading comprehension. Due to high fluency levels, students emerge as automatic readers. When an individual reads with automaticity they are able to read rapidly without effort. Therefore, fluent readers are able to concentrate on comprehending the text.

Throughout much of Fountas's and Pinnell's research, an agreed upon method to determine rate and accuracy is by calculating the total number of words read per minute subtracted by the amount of errors the reader makes (Fountas and Pinnell 1996). Because fluency is such a powerful tool in producing proficient readers, it is important that fluency training be used at the primary level. However, teachers at this point are not given proper training in how to solve the reading fluency problem. It is also noted in Fountas' and Pinnell's research that fluency instruction may have been overlooked

because of the strong focus on phonics and whole language. Many of the reading materials that teachers are using do not mention how to incorporate fluency into their daily lessons. Word recognition, vocabulary development and comprehension seem to be the focus of many reading series and programs. "Fluency is considered an outcome of the goals rather than a contributing factor. Fluency simply is not a stressed aspect of reading instruction" (Richards, 2000 p. 535).

Once teachers have recognized the need for fluency instruction, it is essential to provide students with frequent, positive reading experiences. In order to implement the best teaching method for fluency, teachers must take into consideration the needs of individual students and classrooms. Meribethe Richards summarizes what Richard Allington stated in his 1983 article, " Fluency: The Neglected Reading Goal", the six hypotheses for why some students read more fluently than others.

- First, children who have models of fluent oral reading at home learn that fluent reading is the goal when reading aloud.
- Second, successful readers are often encouraged to focus on the elements of expression while poor readers are asked to focus solely on word recognition, phonics, and other skills in isolation.
- Third, readers who demonstrate fluent oral reading are given more opportunities to read and therefore, further develop this skill.
- Fourth, readers who read fluently are often reading text at their instructional level, if not independent level; those readers who lack fluency are often reading text that are too difficult, in other words at their frustration level.

- Fifth, good fluent readers have more time to read silently, time in which they "reread sentences in an attempt to understand phrases and *experiment with intonation, juncture and stress*" (*Richards, 2000 p. 536*).

Finally, good fluent readers understand that the ultimate goal is not solely accuracy but also meaningful expression.

A recurrent theme throughout the reviewed literature (Fountas and Pinnell 1996, 1999; Brooks 1996) is the theory that the more students read books that are at an appropriate independent level, the more fluent readers they will become. The strategies chosen to improve reading fluency are the use of a leveled classroom library, the implementation of the five-finger test strategy, ongoing parent communication and training, classroom time devoted to silent, independent reading, repeated readings, and guided reading.

Marie Clay (1979b), creator of the Reading Recovery Program in New Zealand, discusses that for over 30 years the teaching problems related to learning difficulties with reading have remained much the same. However, the difference between 30 years ago and today is the increased awareness of the reading problems that schools face. In the past 30 years many ideas and approaches have been deemed successful in improving reading fluency. Guided Reading, a program developed by Irene C. Fountas and Gay Su Pinnell, is a program in which many strategies are used in an effort to increase students' reading abilities and raise their levels of confidence. Some elements of this program are: students reading material at their independent level, leveled books that become increasingly more difficult, modeling and working with students individually

or in small group settings, and continuous teacher observation and assessment (Fountas and Pinnell, 1996).

Another program that combines several research-based elements of effective reading instruction is that of the Four Blocks Approach (FBA) developed by Patricia Cunningham, D.P. Hall and Cheryl M. Sigmon. In the FBA program, literacy instruction takes place in the context of four blocks of time: (a) the guided reading block is where a teacher works with a small group of students, (b) the self-selected reading block is where students read different genres of text at differing difficulty levels, (c) the writing block is where a teacher models good writing followed by students writing independently on topics of their own choice, (d) the working with words block is students learning how to read, spell and write high frequency words through the use of a Word Wall. As Cunningham, Hall and Sigmon (1997) reflected (as cited in Ann M. Duffy-Hester's article, 1999):

> The last eight years have been exciting and satisfying years for us. We have seen the four blocks framework implemented in hundreds of classrooms in diverse settings, with varied populations of children. This framework is based on research but has few revolutionary ideas. It provides teachers a way to implement a balanced program and more nearly meet the needs of children with a range of levels who do not all learn in the same way. (p. 28)

The research of Cunningham, Hall and Sigmon supports that guided reading in combination with the Four Blocks Approach is advantageous to a successful balanced reading program. The use of a leveled classroom library, the implementation of the five-

finger test strategy, ongoing parent communication and training, classroom time devoted to silent, independent reading, and repeated readings are the interventions that have been chosen in this study to increase reading fluency.

A Leveled Classroom Library

> One key to nurturing fluent reading is finding the appropriate text for the reader to read. Texts that are too difficult, overly dense with unfamiliar vocabulary and concepts, can make any otherwise fluent reader disfluent (....) Thus, it is important that we find texts that are well within the reader's independent-instructional range in order to promote fluency (Rasinski, 2000 p. 148).

In researching the relevance of a leveled library within the classroom setting, Irene C. Fountas and Gay Su Pinnell report:

> Why is matching books to readers so important? The young children we teach are building the network of understandings that make up a reading process. Children develop successful processing strategies as they learn to read for meaning. When children are reading a book that they can read, they are able to use many different sources of information from the text in a smoothly operating system." (Fountas and Pinnell, 1999 p.1)

They further report in their book Matching Books To Readers: Using Leveled Books in Guided Reading, K-3:

> A leveled book collection is a large set of books organized by level of difficulty-from very easy books appropriate for emergent readers to longer, complex books for advanced readers. The book levels represent categories into which

> books are sorted by teachers. Placing a book within a level means considering a 'cluster' of characteristics-many different aspects of the text that support and challenge readers. A level is only an approximation and there is some variability expected within it (Fountas and Pinnell, 1999 p.15).

This leveled classroom library intervention supports the idea that if matched with an appropriate book students will extend and refine their reading abilities. The goal of a leveled library is to support students in finding "just right" texts. A "just right" book is the level often referred to as a child's instructional level where the child knows most of the words and can read them quickly with a high level of accuracy. "The 'just right' book provides the context for successful reading work and enables readers to strengthen their "processing" power." (Fountas and Pinnell, 1999 p.3)

In order to implement a leveled classroom library, the classroom teacher must organize books in varying degrees of difficulty. This supports the idea that each child reads at a different pace and, therefore, a different level. In regards to the leveling procedure Fountas and Pinnell state:

> A gradient of difficulty refers to 'levels' designated by alphabet letters. The level is an approximation of difficulty because each child responds to a book differently. Each succeeding alphabet letter indicates increasing difficulty. So, books in a set are always 'leveled' in relation to each other. Level B is a little bit harder than Level A, and so on. In our leveling system, the gradients--the steps in difficulty--are finer at the earlier levels than at the later levels. We believe that smaller steps are needed at first. Differences in text, such as one line or three lines of print can make a big difference for a younger reader; on

> the other hand, the layout of print is not as much a factor for more experienced readers who can handle a variety of lines. Additionally, at more advanced levels there is more variety in genre and format (Fountas and Pinnell, 1999 p.15-16).

The goal of the classroom teacher is to continue to provide materials that support the independent reading level of their students. Routman (1991) supports this idea by reporting that children should be:

> ...guided to read a wide variety of literature and to choose books at their independent reading level. Independent level means that students recognize 95% of the words used in a selection and comprehend 90% of the context. This is the easy reading level, where students read without teacher or parent help. Reading lots of books at this level promotes comprehension, vocabulary development, fluency, and overall reading facility (p.43).

Claire Wille, the author of Matching Books to Children supports the idea of a balanced literacy program by stating, (as cited in Cindy Merrilees's book Effectively Using Guided Reading, 1999 p.100), "Matching books to children works only within a balanced literacy program in which children have many opportunities to share and choose from a wide range of 'unleveled' texts. Its purpose is defeated when it becomes the whole program."

Five-Finger Test

"Some teachers teach children the 'five-finger rule.' If there are five words on a page that you cannot decode the book is probably too hard to read alone" (Cunningham, Hall, and Sigmon,1999 p.20). This strategy was taught to the students

early on in the school year. The five-finger test strategy is a good tool for young children to learn and implement in order for them to become proficient in choosing books at their own level. In conjunction with the five-finger test strategy the children need to be involved in determining the criteria for selecting books. Once the criteria have been shared with the children they can better understand what they need to look for when selecting a book. Teaching children how to choose a book is necessary if we want to help them become lifelong readers. Book selection is a learned behavior.

Routman (1991) distinguishes between skills and strategies, defining strategies as the ability to apply knowledge of skills within the context of a meaningful reading experience. "A skill, no matter how well it has been taught, cannot be considered a strategy until the learner can use it purposefully and independently...the learner must know how and when to apply the skill; that is what elevates the skill to the strategy level" (p.135).

The teacher models this strategy by opening a book to the middle and putting up one hand. The modeling continues with reading the page out loud. As the teacher reads, she purposely makes reading decoding errors. With each error, one finger goes up. If she finishes the page with only one decoding error it is an easy going text. If two fingers go up this text is at the just right level. If three fingers go up the text is challenging. If four fingers go up the text is very challenging and probably would require teacher support. If all five fingers go up, this book should be saved for later when the student's reading ability has improved.

Parent Communication and Training

> Parents are the child's first teachers. They want the very best for their children. They can and want to do more, and you need to respect, encourage, and guide them as they support and enrich their children's learning. You can also gain valuable information and insights from parents so you are able to provide children with the best possible instruction (Barr and Johnson, 1991 p.434).

Relaying information to the parents about the five-finger strategy and a classroom leveled library provides continuity in what is being taught within the classroom and what should be reinforced at home. The five-finger strategy is an easy tool for parents to use to help them better meet the needs of their child. Knowing their child's independent reading level can give a parent a better understanding of how those needs can be met. Realizing that today's parents are extremely busy and often overwhelmed from the materials that come home from school, strategies need to be simplified. Parents will be more willing and open to help their child if the strategies from school are kept simple, easy to understand and are explained in a way that compels them to utilize these strategies at home. The more parents internalize the importance of these strategies, the more apt they will use them on an ongoing basis. One way to communicate the information and strategies to parents is to send home short parent letters that give easy tips to help their child develop their reading skills. These letters to parents contain information about making their home supportive to literacy learning (Johns and Lenski, 1997).

Silent Reading/Differentiated Book Reports

> For many of us, being read to as a child or reading a little before "lights out" was a familiar bedtime ritual. In homes today, television, computers, and video games have all but replaced this reading event. How much a child reads is the best indicator of how well that child reads--the best readers read a lot. Children who don't like to read simply haven't found the right book yet! Children who have been read to regularly and who have time each day to read books will become readers. Readers are not just people who CAN read--readers are people who DO read! In years gone by, the Self-Selected Reading Block was usually done at home! For most children, this is no longer true. Our (Cunningham, Hall, and Sigmon) Self-Selected Reading Block ensures that all children experience daily read alouds and time for reading books of their choice and on their own level (Cunningham, Hall, and Sigmon, 1999 p. 2).

Sustained silent reading is where the students engage in an uninterrupted, individual reading time. This is "one of the most important strategies for increasing fluency, vocabulary, and overall reading ability. Students need to do lots of reading of easy books for pleasure to become fluent, confident readers" (Routman 1991 p.396). As stated earlier, it is important to train students to select books that are at their independent level if parents and teachers want the students to become lifelong readers. A frustration for many teachers is, when students are given the chance to read silently, they often choose books that are too difficult. Because the text is too challenging, the students spend their time staring at the words and pictures instead of practicing their reading. "Slow progress children also need many more opportunities for independent

reading than they usually get....A wide selection of materials suited to the lower level of skills of slow readers should be available" (Clay, 19991 p. 209). An effective strategy for allowing children to read at their own levels during silent reading is the use of a leveled library. This provides the opportunity for the children to select a book within their independent levels. In combination with the leveled library, time devoted daily to silent reading increases the students' motivation and interest in reading. It also has a positive effect because the children spend less time searching for a book and more time reading.

> Since most of the reading students will do in school is silent reading--and since silent reading is how reading is used in the world outside school--students need to be guided in the transition from oral to silent reading. As teachers, we tend to feel slightly uncomfortable allowing silent reading during 'teaching' time, but it is necessary if students are to become successful, independent readers. When students find they can begin to monitor their own reading and work out trouble spots on their own, their reading confidence, along with the amount of time they spend reading silently, increases. (Routman, 1988 p.398).

It is also important that children get to share what they have read with other students and their teacher. When adult readers read good books, they talk to people about those books. When children are given the opportunity to share and discuss what they have read they are not only building their comprehension skills, but they are also sharing their enthusiasm about books with each other. In an effort to give the students a sense of closure to the Self-Selected Reading Block the use of differentiated book reports have been implemented. These book reports are visual organizers that give the

children a chance to evaluate, summarize and reflect on what they have read. Sharing these book reports with classmates inspires others to want to read the same books. In a sense, they are "selling" the book they have read. "Their selling techniques appear to be quite effective since these books are usually quickly seen in the hands of many of their classmates. Like adults, children like to be reading the same books their friends are reading" (Cunningham, Hall, Sigmon, 1999 p.34).

Repeated Readings

> Repeated reading of a book--especially if the book has rhyme, rhythm, and repetition--make it easy for the beginning reader to join in. Fluency and comprehension improve if the students are given continuous practice. Language, which may not be understood on the first reading, may acquire meaning for the child if it is read again and again. As the child reads words more easily, he is better able to concentrate on meaning. In addition, because the child is familiar with the story, he is able to read it with expression in phrases that flow with the language instead of word-by-word. The student's ability to read the story smoothly contributes to the enjoyment of the book.....It is clear that children actually have a NEED to hear stories repeated (Routman, 1988 p.66).

The repeated reading method is the method in which a student reads and rereads a passage aloud until the student reads successfully with fluency and comprehension. Repeated readings have been known to be used to develop speed and accuracy in reading. Within the classroom setting, the teacher can model the use

of repeated reading by reading a text fluently to show the class how effective readers read. During the modeling, the teacher will involve the students in this process by asking the children to make predictions, discuss the events, and relate these events to their own personal experiences. Following teacher modeling, the teacher may ask the students to independently reread the same passage, while on other occasions the teacher may ask the children to reread the same passage within a small group. By reading and rereading the same passage multiple times, the children become more familiar with the vocabulary, the story elements, and the main idea of the book. "Students read confidently because the material is both meaningful and familiar to them....It contributes to their desire to read" (Routman, 1988 p.66).

Project Objectives and Processes

As a result of the use of leveled books and various reading strategies to improve reading fluency, during the period of September 2000 to March 2001, the targeted elementary students will increase their reading fluency and as a result confidence and motivation will increase. These skills will be measured by Curriculum Based Measurements, running records, phonemic awareness tests, and progression through levels of books in the classroom.

In order to accomplish the goal of increased reading fluency, the following processes are necessary:

1. A library of leveled books will be organized and maintained by the classroom teacher according to criteria found in research material.

2. Students will be introduced to the concept of leveled books and then trained in the process.

3. Parents will be introduced to the concept of leveled books and then trained in the process.

4. The classroom teacher will monitor the progress of each child.

5. Ongoing communication between parents and teacher will be promoted.

Project Action Plan

1. Teacher Involvement

A. June 2000

Classroom teachers will level classroom library in sequential order from A-Z. ("A" being an easy read, "Z" being the most difficult; see criteria).

B. Weeks 1-2 (September 5-15)

1. Parent contact in form of a letter
2. Introduce students to concept of classroom leveled library.
3. Administer reading attitude survey to children.
4. Distribute parent survey.

C. Weeks 3-4 (September 18-29)

1. Review and organize returned parent survey and letter.
2. Review and organize student survey.
3. Administer Curriculum Based Measurement (CBM).
4. Review results of CBM and continue observation of student reading.

D. Weeks 5-6 (October 2-13)

1. Begin to place students in appropriate levels that best fit their independent reading ability (A-Z).
2. Introduce students to five-finger test, a type of reading strategy.
3. Letter is sent home explaining to parents the importance of the five-finger process and an overview of the leveled classroom library their children are using in school.

E. Weeks 7-8 (October 16-27)

1. Continue data collection with the use of running records.
2. Set up a bi-monthly schedule to meet individually with students in order to monitor progression.
3. Monitor student progression through leveled library using one on one interview process and running records.

F. Weeks 9-16 (October 30-December 15)

1. Continue data collection with the use of running records and bimonthly interview process.
2. Re-administer student reading attitude survey.
3. Conferences with parents to address progress and grades
4. Monitor student progression through leveled library using one on one interview process and running records.
5. Continue to reinforce five-finger test reading strategy with both parents and students.
6. Introduce differentiated book reports.

G. Weeks 17-22 (January 3-30)

1. Continue data collection with the use of running records, district spelling program, retesting of CBM, and bimonthly interview process.
2. Ongoing communication with parents to address progress and grades
3. Monitor student progression through leveled library using one on one interview process and running records.
4. Continue to reinforce five-finger test reading strategy with both parents and students.

H. Weeks 23-24 (February)

1. Finalize data collection and analyze results of study.
2. Give final student attitude survey.
3. Continue to utilize research and strategies with students.
5. Follow up with parents about feelings towards their children's in-school and at-home reading progress.

Methods of Assessment

In order to assess the students' improvement in reading fluency, the students were given district mandated Curriculum Based Measurement tests and a reading attitude survey. The expectation on the part of the student was to complete a reading log and book reports that would be monitored by the classroom teacher on a weekly basis. A parent informational survey related to reading at home was administered.

CHAPTER FOUR

PROJECT RESULTS

Historical Description of the Intervention

The objective of this project was to improve reading fluency of students in three multiage classes. In an effort to facilitate a reading program that focused on individual student levels, a classroom leveled library of books was introduced and implemented to the students at Sites A, B, and C. In addition, training for both parents and students of the five-finger test method was presented. Increased silent reading time and repeated reading strategies were practiced in order to achieve the desired results. Other components to the project included student reading attitude surveys, parent attitude surveys, curriculum based measurement tools, and ongoing student reading assessments by the teacher.

The teachers at Sites A, B, and C expressed a concern with the current reading practices being used within their classrooms. The teachers noted that their students were not exhibiting high levels of reading fluency. This concern was validated after administering the Curriculum Based Measurement, tests that measure word recognition, fluency, comprehension and phonemic awareness. The three classrooms involved in this research were multiage classrooms with a wide range of reading abilities. The researchers/teachers agreed that in order to meet the needs of their students a revised

reading program should be implemented to improve the success of all students in reading fluency.

Teacher Involvement

During the summer the teachers/researchers at Sites A, B, and C collaborated on what made a text easy, what made a text just right, and what made a text challenging. The teachers/researchers followed guidelines according to the criteria found in Effectively Using Guided Reading by Cindy Merrilees. The books were organized by levels A-Z with level A being an easy read and level Z being the most difficult read. Books were labeled with stickers marked with a letter that corresponded with the level of difficulty. These books were then placed in baskets that were labeled with letters of the alphabet. Also, a five-finger bulletin board was assembled to showcase the proper strategy in choosing a book. The teachers/researchers copied a passage from each leveled basket to be used in the teacher/student interview process. Book report forms were matched with each level in order to assess reading comprehension.

Student Involvement

During the first week of the implementation of the action research project, the Elementary Reading Attitude Survey was administered to all targeted students at Sites A, B, and C. To determine the exact scope of the problem, students' feelings about reading were inventoried. The survey was broken down into two specific areas: academic reading and reading for enjoyment. The survey consisted of six questions and took approximately ten minutes to administer. Each question was read to the students by the teachers/researchers. Each question was followed by three graphics

depicting a full sun, a partial sun and a cloud. The graphics were intended to reflect the feelings of the students ranging from positive to negative.

The parents of the students at Sites A, B, and C were informed of the action research project via an informational letter. The purpose of the letter was to inform the parents of the action plan and how it would positively impact their child in reading. The letter also served as a permission slip to participate in the action research project. Additionally, a parent survey consisting of eight questions was distributed with the intention of gaining insight as to the parents' feelings and perceptions of their children's reading abilities.

During the third and fourth weeks of school a district-mandated a Curriculum Based Measurement (CBM) was administered. The CBM included a sight words test, a phonetic spelling test (Schlagal and Morris), a reading fluency grade specific passage and a comprehension test. Each of the tests was administered on a one on one basis with the classroom teacher acting as the facilitator. The scores of these four tests were recorded for comparison among grade level peers within the classroom and district standards. Another purpose for administering these tests was for tracking the progress of each student throughout the school year. The findings of these tests are found later in this chapter.

The next phase of the action plan occurred in weeks five and six. This phase consisted of reviewing and organizing the student and parent surveys. Using the results of the CBM testing as a guide, the teacher/researchers utilized the five-finger method to determine placement of the students at their appropriate reading levels. A child was asked to read aloud from a leveled basket of books chosen by the classroom teacher.

During this time the teacher monitored the student's reading by recording miscues on a corresponding copy of the reading passage. If four to five miscues were recorded, the leveled basket would be deemed too difficult for the child. If two to three miscues were recorded, the leveled basket would be deemed an appropriate placement. If zero to one miscue was recorded, the leveled basket would be deemed too easy and the next level would be tested for possible placement.

The students were introduced to the five-finger test simultaneously as they were placed in their individual reading level. (Appendix H) The five-finger test was modeled for the students as they were being tested for their appropriate reading levels. The teachers/researchers demonstrated that with each miscue a finger was raised. With this demonstration the students became aware of the steps that were to be taken in order to self-monitor their book selection. Over the next few weeks the students were given the opportunity to practice and urged to use the five-finger test method for choosing books at home, in the library or outside of the classroom.

During the sixth week, a letter was sent home explaining the five-finger test to the parents and how they were to use this process to support the reading needs of their child. The note also explained and gave an overview of the classroom leveled library their children were using in school. (Appendix I) Also, at this time the children were introduced to the process of recording the books that they read into a reading log. (Appendix J) This log served as a record of all the books they read during each sustained silent reading time. The teachers/researchers modeled the procedure as to how to enter books into their reading log. The students were told that in order to move to the next level they were required to read and record most of the books in the leveled

basket to which they were assigned. The teachers/researchers used this log to determine if the individual child was using his/her silent reading time appropriately.

Throughout weeks seven and eight the data collection process continued. Children were met with individually during a reading interview to monitor his/her progression through the levels. The teachers/researchers evaluated each child by listening to the student read aloud. As the student read, the teacher/researcher counted the miscues using the five-finger test strategy. The child's reading log was then checked for the number of entries recorded. If the child passed the five-finger test during their reading interview, and had properly recorded a sufficient number of entries, the student was promoted to the next leveled basket.

During weeks nine through sixteen the children followed a daily procedure that included 20 minutes of silent reading, recording of books read in their reading logs, and continued use of the five-finger test when selecting books in the library. Periodically, the students were interviewed by their teacher, and their reading progress was assessed. In an effort to make the students more accountable for their daily silent reading, the teachers/researchers introduced differentiated book reports. Just as the baskets of books increased in difficulty, the book reports also increased in difficulty. The children were expected to complete two book reports per month that were appropriate to their levels.

During the eleventh week mandatory parent-teacher conferences took place. During these conferences the parents were informed of their child's reading progress. Many of the parents remarked that their child had already informed them of the daily procedures that happened within the classroom. The teachers/researchers noted was

that the parents seemed to be more aware of their child's independent reading level and were very receptive to the concept of a leveled library. This behavior was different from previous years. The parents were given additional information regarding reading strategies that have been implemented at home. Parents were urged to question their child periodically about their progression through the leveled library. Many parents positively stated during the November conferences that their children's needs were being met.

Towards the end of the sixteenth week the Elementary Reading Attitude Survey was re-administered. The attitude survey was used to compare the initial attitudes of the students at the beginning of the study to their attitudes after the implementation of specific reading strategies used during the action research project.

Throughout weeks 17-22, the teachers/researchers continued their data collection through the use of running records, the bi-monthly interview process, the re-testing of Curriculum Based Measurement Tests and the monitoring of student progression through the leveled library. Ongoing communication with parents continued to address progress and ways for parents to help at home. According to the teachers/researchers the reinforcement of the five-finger test reading strategy with both parents and students contributed to the success of this research.

During the 22nd week of this research, the Curriculum Based Measurement Tests were re-administered. The September CBM results were then compared with the January CBM results in an effort to show reading improvement.

The last two weeks of the research process involved finalizing the data collection. The results that were produced indicated that the students' reading fluency increased.

The teachers/researchers at Sites A, B, and C met to debrief and discuss the outcomes of the action plan.

Presentation and Analysis of Results

In order to assess the effects of leveled books, the five-finger test strategy, repeated readings, parental training and involvement, increased silent reading time, and differentiated book reports, Curriculum Based Measurement tools, running records and informal reading attitude inventories were used.

All students at Sites A, B, and C were given the Elementary Reading Attitude Survey twice during the course of this study. The purpose of administering this survey twice was to enable the teacher/researchers to assess the change in students' attitudes toward reading during the course of this study. The November results (Table 16) are compared with the September results (Table 1):

Table 1

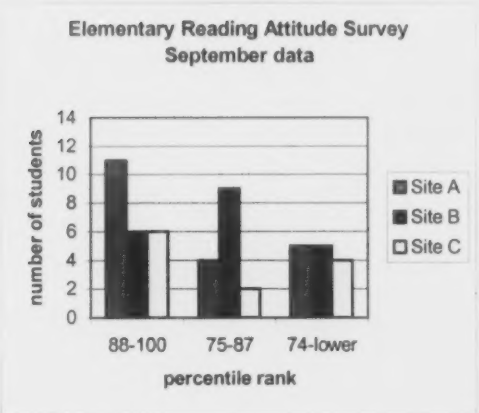
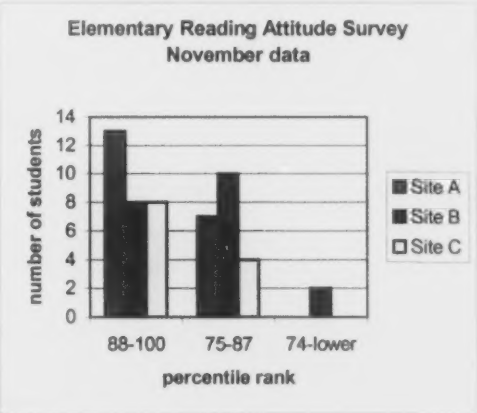


Table 16



In September, 11 students at Site A showed a very positive interest toward reading, while in November, 13 students at Site A showed a very positive interest toward reading. In September, four students at Site A showed a moderate interest toward reading, while in November, seven students at Site A showed a moderate interest toward reading. In September, five students at Site A showed a lower interest toward reading, while in November, none of the students showed a lower interest toward reading.

In September, six students at Site B showed a very positive interest toward reading, while in November, eight students at Site B showed a very positive interest toward reading. In September, nine students at Site B showed a moderate interest toward reading, while in November, ten students at Site B showed a moderate interest toward reading. In September, five students at Site B showed a lower interest toward reading, while in November, two students showed a lower interest toward reading.

In September, six students at Site C showed a very positive interest toward reading, while in November, eight students at Site C showed a very positive interest toward reading. In September, two students at Site C showed a moderate interest toward reading, while in November, four students at Site C showed a moderate interest toward reading. In September, four students at Site C showed a lower interest toward reading, while in November, none of the students showed a lower interest toward reading.

A Curriculum Based Measurement (CBM) was administered twice to all students at Sites A, B, and C. These assessment tools were based on district grade level standards. The first set of CBM's was administered in September and then re-

administered in January. The results of the September and January scores are compared in an effort to show improvement in reading fluency.

Table 17 Comparison of CBM Reading Scores for 10 Second Graders at Site A

Areas Assessed	Below district standard		At district standard		Above district standard	
	Sept.	Jan.	Sept.	Jan.	Sept.	Jan.
Sight words	5	0	1	0	4	10
Reading Fluency	6	0	0	0	4	10
Schlagal Spelling	10	9	0	0	0	1
Comprehension	7	2	0	1	3	7

*Refer to Chapter Two for district standards pp. 24-26

The results of the second graders at Site A on the Sight Words CBM in September showed five of the ten students below district standard, one student at district standard and four students above district standard. In comparison, the January CBM scores showed all of the students above district standard. The results on the Reading Fluency CBM in September showed six of the ten students below district standard, no students at district standard and four students above district standard. In comparison, the January CBM scores showed all of the students above district standard. The results on the Schlagal Spelling CBM in September showed all students below district standard. In comparison, the January CBM scores showed nine of the ten students below district standard, no students at district standard and one of the ten students above district standard. The results on the Comprehension CBM in September showed seven of the ten students below district standard, no students at district standard and three students above district standard. In comparison, the January CBM scores showed two of the ten students below district standard, one student at district standard and seven of the ten students above district standard.

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Table 18 Comparison of CBM Reading Scores for 10 Third Graders at Site A

Areas Assessed	Below district standard		At district standard		Above district standard	
	Sept.	Jan.	Sept.	Jan.	Sept.	Jan.
Sight words	3	0	0	1	7	9
Reading Fluency	5	2	0	0	5	8
Schlagal Spelling	7	6	0	1	3	3
Comprehension	5	5	2	1	3	4

The results of the third graders at Site A on the Sight Words CBM in September showed three of the ten students were below district standard, none of the students were reported at district standard and seven students were above district standard. In comparison, the January CBM scores showed no students were below district standard, one student at district standard and nine of the ten students were above district standard. The results on the Reading Fluency CBM in September showed five of the ten students were below district standard, none of the students were at district standard and five students were above district standard. In comparison, the January CBM scores showed two of the ten students below district standard, while none of the students were at district standard and eight of the ten students above district standard. The results on the Schlagal Spelling CBM in September showed seven of the ten students below district standard, no students at district standard and three students above district standard. In comparison, the January CBM scores showed six of the ten students below district standard, one student at district standard and three of the ten students above district standard. The results on the Comprehension CBM in September showed five of the ten students below district standard, two students at district standard and three students above district standard. In comparison, the January CBM scores

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showed five of the ten students below district standard, one student at district standard and four of the ten students above district standard.

Table 19 Comparison of CBM Reading Scores for 11 First Graders at Site B

Areas Assessed	Below district standard		At district standard		Above district standard	
	Sept.	Jan.	Sept.	Jan.	Sept.	Jan.
Sight words	8	2	0	3	3	6
Reading Fluency	9	7	0	0	2	4
Morris Spelling	11	10	0	0	0	1
Comprehension	10	7	0	0	1	4

The results of the first graders at Site B on the Sight Words CBM in September showed eight of the 11 students below district standard, no students at district standard and three students above district standard. In comparison, the January CBM scores showed two of the 11 students below district standard, three students at district standard and six of the 11 students above district standard. The results on the Reading Fluency CBM in September showed nine of the 11 students below district standard, no students at district standard and two students above district standard. In comparison, the January CBM scores showed seven of the 11 students below district standard, no students at district standard and four of the 11 students above district standard. The results on the Morris Spelling CBM in September showed all of the students below district standard. In comparison, the January CBM scores showed ten of the 11 students below district standard, no students at district standard and one of the 11 students above district standard. The results on the Comprehension CBM in September showed ten of the 11 students being below district standard, no students at district standard and one student above district standard. In comparison, the January

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CBM scores showed seven of the 11 students below district standard, no students at district standard and four of the 11 students above district standard.

Table 20 Comparison of CBM Reading Scores for 9 Second Graders at Site B

Areas Assessed	Below district standard		At district standard		Above district standard	
	Sept.	Jan.	Sept.	Jan.	Sept.	Jan.
Sight words	4	1	3	0	2	8
Reading Fluency	6	1	0	0	3	8
Schlagal Spelling	9	8	0	0	0	1
Comprehension	6	0	0	0	3	9

The results of the second graders at Site B on the Sight Words CBM in September showed four of the nine students below district standard, three students at district standard and two students above district standard. In comparison, the January CBM scores showed one of the nine students below district standard, no students were at district standard and eight of the nine students above district standard. The results on the Reading Fluency CBM in September showed six of the nine students below district standard, and three students were above district standard. In comparison, the January CBM scores showed one of the nine students below district standard, and eight of the nine students were above district standard. The results on the Schlagal Spelling CBM in September showed all of students below district standard. In comparison, the January CBM scores showed eight of the nine students below district standard, and one of the nine students above district standard. The results on the Comprehension CBM in September showed six of the nine students below district standard, and three students above district standard. In comparison, the January CBM scores showed all students above district standard.

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Table 21 Comparison of CBM Reading Scores for 13 First Graders at Site C

Areas Assessed	Below district standard		At district standard		Above district standard	
	Sept.	Jan.	Sept.	Jan.	Sept.	Jan.
Sight words	8	4	1	1	4	8
Reading Fluency	8	7	0	0	5	6
Morris Spelling	13	13	0	0	0	0
Comprehension	9	7	0	0	4	6

The results of the first graders at Site C on the Sight Words CBM in September showed eight of the 13 students below district standard, one student at district standard and four students above district standard. In comparison, the January CBM scores showed four of the 13 students below district standard, one student at district standard and eight of the 13 students above district standard. The results on the Reading Fluency CBM in September showed eight of the 13 students below district standard, and five students above district standard. In comparison, the January CBM scores showed seven of the 13 students below district standard, and six of the 13 students above district standard. The results on the Morris Spelling CBM in September showed all students below district standard. The January CBM scores did not indicate a change in scores. The results on the Comprehension CBM in September showed nine of the 13 students below district standard, and four students above district standard. In comparison, the January CBM scores showed seven of the 13 students below district standard, and six of the 13 students above district standard.

The interventions appear to have had a positive effect on reading fluency scores. Also, sight word vocabulary and comprehension scores seemed to increase as a result of the interventions.

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Conclusions and Recommendations

Based on the presentation and analysis of the data from the Curriculum Based Measurement, the Elementary Reading Attitude Survey, running records, and parental input the majority of the targeted students revealed an improvement in their ability to read fluently. The reading strategies learned during the course of this study appear to have had a positive effect on the students' independent reading time. It was noted by the teachers/researchers that the majority of the targeted students at Sites A, B, and C used the five-finger test strategy to choose a book appropriate to their level on a consistent basis. It was also noted that the students were more accountable during sustained silent reading time. This increased accountability on the part of the students was due to the expectation of completing a reading log and two monthly book reports. The excitement of the students heightened as they were challenged to advance through the leveled baskets of books. The students were eager to be promoted to the next level. The encouragement by the other students as a classmate was promoted positively affected their attitude toward reading.

At the beginning of this study 40% of the second grade students at Site A were at or above district fluency standards according to September CBM data. In January 100% of the second grade students at Site A were at or above district fluency standards according to the CBM data collected by the teacher/researcher. At the beginning of this study 50% of the third grade students at Site A were at or above district fluency standards according to September CBM data. In January 80% of the third grade students at Site A were at or above district fluency standards according to the CBM data collected by the teacher/researcher. At the beginning of this study 18% of the first

grade students at Site B were at or above district fluency standards according to September CBM data. In January 36% of the first grade students at Site B were at or above district fluency standards according to the CBM data collected by the teacher/researcher. At the beginning of this study 33% of the second grade students at Site B were at or above district fluency standards according to September CBM data. In January 88% of the second grade students at Site B were at or above district fluency standards according to the CBM data collected by the teacher/researcher. At the beginning of this study 38% of the first grade students at Site C were at or above district fluency standards according to September CBM data. In January 46% of the first grade students at Site C were at or above district fluency standards according to the CBM data collected by the teacher/researcher.

Based on the information gathered from the Elementary Reading Attitude Survey the results appeared to be inconclusive. Many variables such as student perception of the question, teacher perception of the question, socio-economic background of the students and students' moods might have effected the way the students answered each question. The data collected was not sufficient enough to justify future use of this survey. A positive gain was shown in the comparison tables (Tables 1 and 16) of the two Elementary Reading Attitude Surveys administered. However, the teachers/researchers recognized this change to be minimal in comparison to the daily attitudes displayed toward the leveled library. An amended Elementary Reading Attitude Survey that included more specific questions related to reading and a script for the teacher to follow would eliminate some of the variables that may have impacted the results.

The results of the January CBM assessment showed an obvious increase in fluency among the majority of the targeted students. The increases were more prevalent in the second and third graders because those students were not being taught how to read, but rather were concentrating on increasing their fluency. The first graders at Sites B and C, however, did not seem to make as significant of a gain. This was due to the fact that the first grade students needed to be taught how to read before their fluency could be measured. A student cannot make gains in fluency until they have the skills to read. The teachers/researchers are confident that the first grade students at Sites B and C will continue to make gains in their reading fluency as these interventions continue through the course of the school year.

The primary intervention in this study was the use of a leveled library. The placement of the students at a level that was appropriate to their individual reading ability gave the students the opportunity to be successful. The students' confidence increased as they succeeded in being promoted through the levels. Reading books at an independent level allowed the students to practice and increase their fluency. It is concluded by the teachers/researchers that a leveled library provides a chance for all students to strengthen their reading fluency on a daily basis with minimal teacher intervention. A classroom leveled library equips the students with the necessary skills to gauge their own reading success.

Finally, as a result of this study the parents at Sites A, B, and C were more informed to their child's reading performance. The information gathered from running records, teacher interviews, teacher observations, reading logs and book reports all served as ongoing daily assessments that provided parents with a complete

understanding of their child's independent reading level. This heightened awareness allowed for the parental support of this program in and out of school. As a result of the ongoing assessments, the teachers/researchers found it easy to relay information to the parents concerning their child's reading level.

The teachers/researchers recommend the implementation of a classroom leveled library, student and parent training of the five-finger test strategy and the use of differentiated book reports to increase reading fluency and foster student independence in reading. Providing students with the necessary skills to choose books appropriately enables them to become self-reliant in their reading abilities outside of the classroom setting. The findings of this study show that students are capable of transferring and applying the knowledge gained to choose books while giving them the opportunity to develop as individual, confident readers.

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Appendices

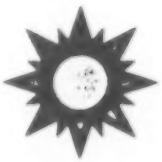
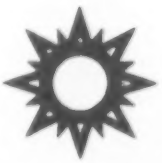
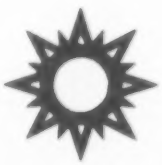
Appendix A

Elementary Reading Attitude Survey

Elementary Reading Attitude Survey

School_____ Grade_____ Name_____

Directions: Put an X on the picture that shows how you feel.

How do you feel about reading?			
How do you feel about getting a book for a gift?			
How do you feel about reading aloud in class?			
Do your parents read aloud to you?			
How do you feel about reading a new book?			
How do you feel when the teacher asks you questions about what you read?			

Appendix B

Parent Survey

Parent Survey

Please take a few moments to reflect on your child's reading and answer each question as best you can.

Parent(s) Name:_____ **Child's Name:**_____

Date:_____

Please circle the answer that best fits your response.

1. **Do you read to you child?** Yes No

2. **How many times in a week do you read to your child?** 0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7

3. **Does your child have a library card?** Yes No

4. **How often do you go to the library with your child?**

Once a week Once every two weeks Once a month Not often

5. **On a scale of 1 to 5 (5 being the highest) how important is reading to you?**

1 2 3 4 5

6. **On a scale of 1 to 5 (5 being the highest) how important is reading to your child?**

1 2 3 4 5

7. **Is there any family member/ relative that you believe struggles with reading?**

Yes No

Please respond to the following question in as much detail as possible. Use the back of this sheet if necessary.

8. **What are your child's strengths in reading? What does your child find to be challenging when reading?**

Appendix C

Sight Words Test

DIRECTIONS FOR ADMINISTERING & SCORING
THE SIGHT WORD TEST

1. Seat the student next to you at a table. If you are right-handed, the student should sit on your left, if you are left-handed, on your right.

2. Explain to the student: "I am going to show you some words in a list. You will only see the word for a very short time, so watch closely. Tell me the word as soon as you see it. If you do not know it, I will give you more time to look at it again."

3. Place the student copy of the Sight Word List in front of the student. Use two index cards as shutters to flash the words at **half-second intervals**. Move the top card smoothly up, then smoothly down to meet the bottom card and hide the word. Move both cards down to line up with the number of the next word.

4. Mark each correct response with a "+" in the **Timed** column.

5. On words not correctly identified, open the shutter and allow students to analyze the word to determine an **Untimed** score. After 10 seconds go on to the next word.

6. Use a "—" to record words not identified either in the Timed or Untimed column. If the student misreads a word, jot down what was said in the appropriate column.

7. When the student misses 10 of the **Timed** words, stop the procedure.

8. Score the **Timed** and **Untimed** responses separately. The student scores 1 point for each correct response in either column. Add the **Timed** column to the **Untimed** column for the total **Untimed** score.

IF AT ANY TIME A STUDENT APPEARS TO BE FRUSTRATED, STOP THE TESTING, AND GIVE THE STUDENT CREDIT FOR THE ITEMS COMPLETED CORRECTLY.

Example:

		Timed	Untimed
1.	man	+	
2.	bed	bad	+
3.	make	—	made
4.	bean	been	+
5.	want	—	—
	Score	1	3

18-20 points	Independent Level
12-17 points	Instructional Level
0-11 points	Frustration Level

Use the **Timed** score to determine Sight Word Knowledge. Use the **Untimed** score to determine phonetic knowledge.

Record the Timed score on the Class Summary form.

Student Copy

SIGHT WORDS
Level 1

1. man
2. bed
3. by
4. top
5. sit
6. little
7. help
8. has
9. come
10. him
11. fast
12. home
13. yes
14. sat
15. as
16. got
17. off
18. last
19. old
20. box

Adapted from Houghton Mifflin IRI

Student _____ Date _____

SIGHT WORDS
Level 1

1.	man	_____	_____
2.	bed	_____	_____
3.	by	_____	_____
4.	top	_____	_____
5.	sit	_____	_____
6.	little	_____	_____
7.	help	_____	_____
8.	has	_____	_____
9.	come	_____	_____
10.	him	_____	_____
11.	fast	_____	_____
12.	home	_____	_____
13.	yes	_____	_____
14.	sat	_____	_____
15.	as	_____	_____
16.	got	_____	_____
17.	off	_____	_____
18.	last	_____	_____
19.	old	_____	_____
20.	box	_____	_____
		_____	_____
	Score	Timed	Untimed

Adapted from Houghton Mifflin IRI

Student Copy

SIGHT WORDS
Level 2

1. learn
2. smile
3. orange
4. almost
5. goes
6. believe
7. space
8. hands
9. animals
10. miss
11. stood
12. white
13. show
14. men
15. grandfather
16. secret
17. dress
18. different
19. walk
20. try

Adapted from Houghton Mifflin IRI

Student _____ Date _____

SIGHT WORDS
Level 2

1.	learn	_____	_____
2.	smile	_____	_____
3.	orange	_____	_____
4.	almost	_____	_____
5.	goes	_____	_____
6.	believe	_____	_____
7.	space	_____	_____
8.	hands	_____	_____
9.	animals	_____	_____
10.	miss	_____	_____
11.	stood	_____	_____
12.	white	_____	_____
13.	show	_____	_____
14.	men	_____	_____
15.	grandfather	_____	_____
16.	secret	_____	_____
17.	dress	_____	_____
18.	different	_____	_____
19.	walk	_____	_____
20.	try	_____	_____
		_____	_____
	Score	Timed	Untimed

Adapted from Houghton Mifflin IRI

Student Copy

SIGHT WORDS
Level 3

1. trick
2. camp
3. several
4. during
5. passengers
6. study
7. listened
8. captain
9. discover
10. fished
11. bell
12. papers
13. gently
14. brothers
15. sheet
16. garbage
17. reason
18. silent
19. below
20. stage

Adapted from Houghton Mifflin IRI

Student _____ Date _____

SIGHT WORDS
Level 3

1.	trick	_____	_____
2.	camp	_____	_____
3.	several	_____	_____
4.	during	_____	_____
5.	passengers	_____	_____
6.	study	_____	_____
7.	listened	_____	_____
8.	captain	_____	_____
9.	discover	_____	_____
10.	fished	_____	_____
11.	bell	_____	_____
12.	papers	_____	_____
13.	gently	_____	_____
14.	brothers	_____	_____
15.	sheet	_____	_____
16.	garbage	_____	_____
17.	reason	_____	_____
18.	silent	_____	_____
19.	below	_____	_____
20.	stage	_____	_____
	Score	_____ Timed	_____ Untimed

Adapted from Houghton Mifflin IRI

Appendix D

Reading Fluency Test

DIRECTIONS FOR 1-MINUTE ADMINISTRATION OF READING PASSAGES

Materials:

1. Unnumbered copy of passage (student copy)
2. Numbered copy of passage (examiner copy)
3. Stopwatch
4. Tape recorder (optional)[a]

Directions:

1. Place the unnumbered copy in front of the student.
2. Place the numbered copy in front of you but shielded so the student cannot see what you record.
3. Say these specific directions to the student for each passage:

   When I say 'begin,' start reading aloud at the top of this page. Read across the page (DEMONSTRATE BY POINTING). ***Try to read each word. If you come to a word you don't know, I'll tell it to you. Be sure to do your best reading. Are there any questions?"*** (Pause)

4. Say ***"Begin"*** and start your stopwatch when the student says the first word. If the student fails to say the first word of the passage after 3 seconds, tell them the word and mark it as incorrect, then start your stopwatch.[b]
5. Follow along on your copy. Put a (/) through words read incorrectly or write the word the student said (see Running Record/Miscue Analysis Sample).
6. If a student stops or struggles with a word for 3 seconds, tell the student the word and mark it as incorrect.
7. At the end of 1 minute, place a bracket (]) after the last word and say, ***"Stop."***
8. If you forget to start the stopwatch, use the "backup" story and begin again.

a) Tape recorders facilitate error analysis.

b) On rare occasions the student may "speed read" (i.e., read the passage very fast and without expression). If this occurs, tell the student, *"This is not a speed reading test. The goal is to read smoothly. Begin again, and be sure to do your best reading."*

RUNNING RECORD/MISCUE ANALYSIS
CODING SYSTEM

/ For skipped word or you told the student the word.

Reversals

_____ (underline) For repetitions

/ or _/ For when time is up

not
^ For insertions

Do not count **repetitions, insertions or self-corrections** as errors because it will show up in the time and the number of words read.

Count mispronunciations of proper names only once for the same name.

To determine "words per minute" (wpm), count the number of words read and subtract the number of errors.

Example: 87 words read
4 errors
83 wpm (Words Read Correctly)

Fluency Scale

By the end of:	Oral
1st grade	60
2nd grade	70
3rd grade	90
4th grade	120
5th grade	150
6th grade	150
7th grade	155
8th grade	165

Record the "wpm" score on the Classroom Test Data form.

RUNNING RECORD/MISCUE ANALYSIS SAMPLE

Jimmy

From then on, Johnny was the expert at origami. His 10
figures were not always the best. His folds were straight. He 20
was careful and patient. He moved quickly but never 29
hurried. Soon he became Mr. Uchida's helper, showing 37
the others how to turn a fold inside out, or how to line up 51
the edges exactly. The bulletin board was covered with 60
Johnny's paper animals. 63

Emily was just no good at origami. She couldn't get 73
the folds rights. She couldn't line up the corners, and she 84
couldn't understand the instructions. Her little figures 91
were wrinkled and dirty from the sweat of her fingers. 101
The harder she tried, the more frustrated she became. But 111
she wouldn't give up. She wanted to learn how to make 122
the crane, the graceful little figure that could flap its wings. 133

She tried and tried. Once, when she looked up, Johnny 143
was watching her. He wasn't laughing. He looked as if 153
he knew just how she felt. Emily quickly looked down 163
at her work again. She felt stupid and clumsy. On purpose, 174
she crumpled a sheet of origami paper into a ball and 185
threw it angrily on the floor. The next time she picked a 197
fresh sheet of paper, Johnny came over to her desk. 207

He showed her how to line up the corners before 217
making the folds. 220

Name:_____ Date:_____

Total Words Read: 68

Errors: 5

Words Read Correctly: 63

(words per minute)

Houghton Mifflin, 1991, The Origami Truce, p. 122 Lv. 3.

SOME FUN

A dog and her goldfish were sitting by the fire.	10
"I want to have some fun," said the goldfish.	19
"But this is fun," said the dog.	26
"Not really," said the goldfish.	31
"I want to go places and see things.	39
I want to see the woods, the sky, and the sea.	50
I want to see some sharks!"	56
"Oh, very well," said the dog.	62
"This is very kind of you," said the goldfish.	71
"Anything to keep you happy," said the dog.	79
"But we can't go too far from home.	87
We don't want to get lost."	93
"Where will we go first?" asked the goldfish.	101
"I know a place to see some sharks," said the dog.	112
"It's not far."	115
"Oh my!" cried the goldfish.	120
"Sharks!	121

(Over)

Look at their teeth!	125
This is really fun!"	129
"I'm glad you think so," said the dog.	137
"Can we go home now?"	142
"Oh, no!" cried the goldfish.	147
"I want to do more!	152
I want to see the sea."	158
"Anything to keep you happy," said the dog.	166
"Look at the waves!" cried the goldfish.	173
"This is really fun!"	177
But the dog didn't like the sea.	184
"The waves make me feel sick," she said.	192
"Can we go home now?"	197
"Oh, no!" said the goldfish.	202
"I want to see the sky.	208
I want to fly."	212
"Anything to keep you happy," said the dog.	220

Name:_____ Date:_____

Total Words Read: _____

Errors: _____

Words Read Correctly:_____
(words per minute)

Silver Burdett Ginn. 1993. A New Day. Lv. 1.

TONY'S HARD WORK DAY

One time Tony's mother and father bought a 8
house in the country. It was a small house and 18
very broken, but Tony's father liked it because 26
there was green grass everywhere and sweet 33
water and good air that you could breathe all 42
day long. 44

"Smell the air!" Tony's father would say, and 52
everyone would stop what they were doing and 60
breathe in and out. 64

There was a lot of work to do in the country. 75
Painting work and cleaning work and hanging 82
up curtains and taking down spider webs and 90
hammering and nailing and things like that. 97

"Let me help," Tony would say to his father. 106
"Let me hammer." 109

"No, you are too small," Tony's father would 117
answer. "You would hit yourself with the hammer, 125
and then you would cry, and we would all have 135
to stop working and hold you for a little while, so 146
it's not a good idea." 151

"Let me help!" Tony said to his mother, who 160
was sewing curtains. 163

(Over)

"Not right now," said Tony's mother, "because 170
I'm making tiny, tiny stitches with my needle, and 179
your hands aren't smart enough to do such small 188
work, and you would stick yourself and a little 197
blood would come, and you hate blood, and 205
then you would cry, and we would all have to 215
stop working and rock you and sing to you, so 225
that's not a good idea." 230

"Let me help," Tony said to his big brother 239
Matthew, who was painting his room with a big 248
brush. 249

Name:_____ Date: _____

Total Words Read: _____

Errors: _____

Words Read Correctly:_____
(words per minute)

Silver Burdett Ginn. 1993. Tail of a Kite. Lv. 2.

THE FASTEST QUITTER IN TOWN

"You haven't been out for a long time, Great-Grandpa." 10
"Well, when you get old, you'll find out, Johnny, it's just easier 22
to stay inside on your favorite chair and snooze." 31
They sat on the porch together. Johnny looked at the 41
backyard. "Great-Grandpa, were you out here on the day you 52
lost your ring?" 55
The old man bent his head to one side. "I don't know. It's 68
so hard to remember anymore." 73
"Maybe you were. I've looked everywhere else." 80
Great-Grandfather got excited. "Johnny, sometimes when I'm 88
out here, I walk over to the rock garden to touch the marigolds 101
and zinnias. I can't see them too well, but I like to touch them. 115
Look over there Johnny. I've got a feeling." 123
Johnny crawled through the grass, looking, looking. He came to 133
the rock garden. He parted the marigolds and touched the earth 144
around their stems. He felt around the edges of the rocks. He 156
separated the red and yellow zinnias and looked through their 166
leaves. He saw something near a zinnia stem—something shiny. 176
Great-Grandpa!" he yelled. "I found it!" He took the ring to his 189
great-grandfather. 191
Tears came to the old man's eyes. He felt the lost ring. It was 205
caked with dirt. 208
"You found my ring. Thank you, Johnny. I don't know what I would 221
have done without you." 225
The whole family was thrilled. Johnny's grandmother put tape 234
around the ring. Now it would fit Great-Grandfather's finger better 245
and not fall off again. 250

(Over)

And Johnny felt so good inside. It was such a good feeling to 263
have found the ring. He hadn't given up. He hadn't even wanted 275
to quit. The ring was so important to Great-Grandfather, he *never* 287
would have quit. 290

Name:_____ Date:_____

Total Words Read:_____

Errors:_____

Words Read Correctly:_____
(words per minute)

Houghton Mifflin. 1983. Weavers. Lv. 3.

Appendix E

Morris Spelling Inventory

DIRECTIONS FOR ADMINISTERING & SCORING
THE MORRIS SPELLING INVENTORY

At the beginning of first grade this test will most likely need to be administered in a one-on-one situation. Periodic checks during the year will most likely be able to be administered in a group situation. When administering within a group situation, please seat students so they are not tempted to copy. If you suspect a student is copying, change the student's seat immediately. If a student copies, the test results are invalid and cannot be used for data collection purposes.

The spelling task begins with the teacher modeling a sound-it-out spelling of the sample word, 'mat'. She says to the student: "We are going to spell 'mat'. What do you hear first in 'mat'? What letter should I put down first? *M*. Good!" The teacher writes *M* on the paper. Then she says the word again, slowly, but not so slowly as to segment the phonemes artificially. "What comes next? *A*. Good!" She writes *A* on the paper and proceeds, in a similar manner, to the final letter in the word.

If the student is able to provide *at least* the beginning letter in the sample word (M in 'mat'), the teacher can proceed with the 12-word spelling test. "Now you (the student) are going to spell some words. If you are not sure how to spell a word, think about what letter comes first, what comes next, and so on. Try your best." The teacher then dictates the 12 spelling words. (Note: If the student is unable to provide even the beginning letter in 'mat', the teacher should try a second sample word, 'dig." If the student is still unsuccessful in providing the beginning letter (*D*, in this case), the spelling test need not be administered.

In administering the spelling test, the teacher should pronounce each word naturally, use it in a simple sentence, and then repeat the word a final time. As the student attempts to spell the words on the test, the teacher can provide encouragement when it is needed; for example, "Okay, you tried hard on that one," or "You got the beginning and ending letters on that word. Good!" Once the test is begun all 12 words should be administered. However, if a student appears to be frustrated, **stop the testing** and give the student credit for the items completed correctly. The **student** must write the letters for the words they are attempting to spell. The teacher **should not** write the letters for the student during the actual test administration.

Adapted from Morris, D. (1992). Case studies in teaching beginning readers. Fieldstream: Boone, NC.

Scoring by Spelling Stage:

Use the Spelling Stage Scoring Model to determine a student's spelling stage. Examine the spelling attempts to identify the sounds that are represented, as well as, the sounds that are not represented and assign the appropriate points to each word. To decide the overall spelling stage, either look to see which stage most of the words fall into, or add the points for each word and divide by 12, the total number of words. Record the Spelling Stage score on the Class Summary Form.

Note: If a student's spelling is between two stages (scores), it is usually best to assign the lower stage. Decimals (e.g. 1.2, 2.4, 3.6 etc.) are not included on the typed copy of the Class Summary form because progress can only be shown **quantitatively** by moving from one stage to the next or **qualitatively** by representing more sounds in the spelling of the words on succeeding tests (e.g. some vowels are represented now in addition to consonants, "marker vowels" are represented now in addition to short vowels etc.).

If a student scores near the top of a stage (e.g. 2.8 or 2.9, 3.8 or 3.9 etc.), only the teacher can determine if the student is solidly representing the sounds of the next stage by carefully examining the spelling of each word. The teacher might want to examine the student's daily writing to confirm his judgment. If the student is solidly spelling the words at the higher stage, eliminate the decimal and enter the higher stage (score) on the Class Summary Form.

MORRIS SPELLING INVENTORY

1.	back	I hurt my back.
2.	feet	The puppy has little feet.
3.	step	Don't step on the grass.
4.	junk	That old chair is a piece of junk.
5.	picking	We were picking apples.
6.	mail	Put the mail in the box.
7.	side	The side of the building is painted red.
8.	chin	He rubbed his chin.
9.	dress	That's a pretty dress.
10.	peeked	The girl peeked out the window.
11.	lamp	Turn on the lamp.
12.	road	The car turned onto the road.

Words with Inflectional Endings

3 pts = Appropriate vowel in 1st syllable
and
consonant boundaries of 1st syllable must be marked
and
suffix must be represented (pecn for picking; pekt for peeked)

4 pts = Correct short vowel or marked long vowel in 1st syllable
and
consonant boundaries of 1st syllable must be marked
and
vowel in suffix (piking /pikig for picking;
peaked /peked /pekte for peeked)

Exception: peekt = 4 pts

---

	1 pt	2 pts		3pts	4 pts
1. back	b	bk bc beak		bak bac bace baek bake	backe
2 feet	f v	ft fit fat fot	-faet-	fet	fete feat
3. step	s c st	sp se sa stp		sap sep cap stap	stepe

	1 pt	2 pts		3pts	4 pts
4. junk	j g	gc jk jo gu jike		guc juc joc joke juke gok gonk jonc junk gnk	junke junck gunk
5. picking	p	pc pg pn pne pcn peke pen pek pingk		peking pekn piknig pekin pecking	piking pinkig pikig picing
6. mail	m	ml ma	-mial-	mal mall	male malle maill mayl mael mayol
7. side	s c	sd cd	-seid-	sid	sied siad

	1 pt	2 pts		3pts	4 pts
8. chin	c j g h t ch	cn ci ce cind jn		cin hin jin thin then chen gen ten	chine chien
9. dress	d g j rs dr	ds drs js jc		des das dras dais gres gase jres dreis	dres drees
10. peeked	p	pk pt pe pet pen peet peke pikt pit pct pkt		pect pekd pekt	peked peached pekte pecked peekt
11. lamp	l	lp la lm		lap lam lape lmp	lampe
12. road	r	rd ro	-reod-	rod	rode rood roid roode roed

Appendix F

Schlagal Spelling Inventory

DIRECTIONS FOR ADMINISTERING & SCORING
THE SCHLAGAL SPELLING INVENTORY

Administer Spelling Inventories exactly as you would a regular spelling test.

1. Read the word.
2. Use the word in a sentence.
3. Repeat the word.

IF AT ANY TIME A STUDENT APPEARS TO BE FRUSTRATED, STOP THE TESTING, AND GIVE THE STUDENT CREDIT FOR THE ITEMS COMPLETED CORRECTLY.

Scoring:
Each correctly spelled word is worth 1 point.

	Level 1	Levels 2 & 3	Levels 4, 5, 6, 7 & 8
Independent level	16-20 points	20-25 points	24-30 points
Instruction level	10-15 points	12-19 points	15-23 points
Frustration level	0 - 9 points	0 - 11 points	0 - 14 points

Record the score on the Class Summary form.

QUALITATIVE INVENTORY OF WORD KNOWLEDGE

Robert Schlagal
University of Virginia, 1982

Level 2

1. traded
2. cool
3. beaches
4. center
5. short
6. trapped
7. thick
8. plant
9. dress
10. carry
11. stuff
12. try
13. crop
14. year
15. chore
16. angry
17. chase
18. queen
19. wise
20. drove
21. cloud
22. grabbed
23. train
24. shopping
25. float

QUALITATIVE INVENTORY OF WORD KNOWLEDGE

Robert Schlagal
University of Virginia, 1982

Level 3

1. send
2. gift
3. rule
4. trust
5. soap
6. batter
7. knee
8. mind
9. scream
10. sight
11. chain
12. count
13. knock
14. caught
15. noise
16. careful
17. stepping
18. chasing
19. straw
20. nerve
21. thirsty
22. baseball
23. circus
24. handle
25. sudden

Appendix G

Comprehension Test

DIRECTIONS FOR ADMINISTERING & SCORING
THE (MAZE) CLOZE
(Grades 1 & 2)

1. Use the Practice Passage to show students how to complete the passage. Model for students how you would:
   a) read the entire passage before chosing words to complete the sentence.
   b) use context clues to eleminate word choices and choose the one word that makes sense.

2. For the Test Passage, direct the students to use only one word for each blank and try to use the exact word the author would have used. **Remind them to read the entire story before circling the one word that makes sense in the space**. Do **not** assist the students with reading any of the words.

3. **Give no more than 30 minutes for completing the passage.** In fact, most students should be able to complete the cloze task in 10 to 20 minutes. Students will most likely be able to complete the test in a reasonable amount of time or show signs of struggling. Giving more time will not usually be helpful.

5. Determine the number of correct responses. Each correct response is worth 1 point.

9-10 points	Independent Level
8-6 points	Instructional Level
0-5 points	Frustration Level

Record the number correct on the Class Summary form.

IF AT ANY TIME A STUDENT APPEARS TO BE FRUSTRATED, STOP THE TESTING, AND GIVE THE STUDENT CREDIT FOR THE ITEMS COMPLETED CORRECTLY.

Name: Ans. Key Date: _____

LOST +_____

10

I am walking down the street when I hear someone crying.

It's a bear.

He looks lost and afraid.

The [fast (tall) box] buildings scare him.

And he's never seen so many

[(people) home little].

"Don't worry," I tell him.

"The buildings won't hurt [got man (you)],

and most of the people are friendly."

(over)

"How did you get sit old here?" I asked.

"I climbed in to have a top nap by ," he explains, "and when I woke up, I was *lost*."

"I'll help sat has you. Tell me where you live."

"There are trees yes where off I live," he tells me.

So we find some as box trees .

"More trees," he says, "and water!"

I take him to been bed a place where there are more trees—and water, too.

"No," your he come says. "This is not it either."

Harcourt Brace, 1995, Hold On Tight, Lv. 1

Name: _____ Date: _____

LOST +_____

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It's a bear.

He looks lost and afraid.

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Harcourt Brace, 1995, Hold On Tight, Lv. 1

Name: Ans. Key Date: _____

THE MOUSE AND THE STONE CUTTER +_____ 10

Long ago a stonecutter worked in a secret mountain cave that had walls of wonderful stone. Each day he worked crushing and cracking the wall [upon (into) men] small stones that he took home.

By the time [(he) men try] got home, the stars were out. His little house [white are (was)] dark and cold. After he ate a little bread [as (and) goes] milk, he shined stones until they looked as clear as a mirror. He [hands show (could)] buy all the food he needed with those stones.

(over)

One day hands miss while the stonecutter was out of his house, a mouse believe secret came in and nibbled on some bread. It ran behind away miss a curtain when the stonecutter came back.

The stonecutter saw dress holes animals in the bread and said, "A mouse nibbled this. Well, there's enough space walk bread for us both."

The next day, after the stonecutter left, the mouse ate some more bread.

Scott Foresman, 1988, Whistles and Dreams, Lv. 2

Name: _____ Date: _____

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Scott Foresman, 1988, Whistles and Dreams, Lv 2.

DIRECTIONS FOR ADMINISTERING & SCORING
THE (MODIFIED) CLOZE
(Grades 3-5)

1. Use the Practice Passage to show students how to complete the passage. Model reading the entire passage before choosing words to fill in the blanks. Brainstorm with the students how to use context clues to determine words that would make sense. Model how you would eliminate word choices.

2. For the Test Passage, direct the students to use only one word for each blank and try to use the exact word the author would have used. **Remind them to read the entire story before filling in any of the blanks**. Do **not** assist the students with reading any of the words.

3. **Give no more than 30 minutes for completing the passage.** In fact, most students should be able to complete the cloze task in 10 to 20 minutes. Students will most likely be able to complete the test in a reasonable amount of time or show signs of struggling. Giving more time will not usually be helpful.

5. Determine the number of correct responses. Each correct response is worth 1 point. Synonyms that follow the story line are acceptable as correct responses.

9-10 points	Independent Level
6-8 points	Instructional Level
0-5 points	Frustration Level

Record the number correct on the Class Summary form.

IF AT ANY TIME A STUDENT APPEARS TO BE FRUSTRATED, STOP THE TESTING, AND GIVE THE STUDENT CREDIT FOR THE ITEMS COMPLETED CORRECTLY.

Name: Ans. Key Date: _____

A BOWL OF SUN + _____ 10

For a long time Megan had not even known that she was blind. Outside the house, Mike's strong hand had taught her ___how___ to move from place to place. Inside the house, ___she___ knew just where everything was. She could easily find ___her___ way from her own small bedroom to all the ___other___ rooms of the house.

Mike was Megan's father. He ___had___ a leather shop at the front of the house. He ___made___ fine leather belts, shoes, and bags to sell in ___his___ shop. The new leather was smooth and smelled better ___than___ almost anything.

Megan liked to help Mike as he ___worked___. She made sandwiches for their lunch and swept up ___the___ bits of leather that fell to the floor.

Often on Sunday afternoons, Megan and Mike would walk down to the beach. Hand in hand, they would make a trail with their bare feet in the wet sand.

Houghton Mifflin, 1983, Spinners, Lv. 3

Name:_____ Date:_____

A BOWL OF SUN

+_____
10

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Houghton Mifflin, 1983, Spinners, Lv. 3

Appendix H

The Five-Finger Test

1 decoding error
Easy Going
Just Right
Challenging
Very Challenging
Save for Later
5-Finger Test

Choosing Books

Breeze Books

Ask yourself these questions. If you are answering **YES**, this book is probably a **"BREEZE BOOK"** for you. Have fun reading it!

- Have you read it before?
- Do you understand the story (text) very well?
- Do you know almost every word?
- Can you read it smoothly?

Just-Right Books

Ask yourself these questions. If you are answering **YES**, this book is probably a **"Just-Right"** book for you. Go ahead and learn from it!

- Is this book new to you?
- Are there just a few words per page you don't know?
- When you read are some places smooth and some choppy?
- Will someone be able to help you with the hard parts?

Challenge Books

Ask yourself these questions. If you are answering **YES**, this book is probably a **"Challenge"** book for you. You might want to spend a little time with it now, and give it another try later (perhaps in a couple of months, perhaps in a couple of years).

- Are there more than a few words on a page you don't know?
- Are you confused about what is happening in most of this book?
- When you read, does it sound pretty choppy?
- Will you be reading this book all on your own?

Appendix I

Parent Letter

Dear Parents,

I would like to take this opportunity to address a few of the ideas and procedures involving reading that have been introduced to your children within the classroom. My purpose in writing this letter to you is so that you are well informed of these procedures and that you may transfer and apply this information to your child's daily reading practices. The key ideas that have been introduced at this point are as follows:

- Classroom leveled library
- Five-Finger Test
- Reading Log
- Differentiated Book Reports

CLASSROOM LEVELED LIBRARY
This past summer I spent time putting books into categories by level. This was accomplished by examining the text for number of words per page and difficulty of vocabulary. Once this was completed I then labeled each book according to its level of difficulty. To organize the levels in an easy to use system the books were placed in baskets and labeled with a corresponding letter. This letter represents the level of the book's difficulty. The letters span from A-Z. This will allow your child to read at their independent level within the classroom.

FIVE-FINGER TEST
Your child has been taught an easy way to determine if a book is at an appropriate level for him/her. Teaching your child how to select a book that is appropriate to their independent reading level will enable them to become lifelong readers. I feel that teaching them this strategy is essential because research shows that choosing a book at the independent reading level will help to increase reading fluency. Please refer to the attached sheets where you will find more information about the Five-Finger Test and how it is an important tool in choosing books. Ask your child to model how this process works.

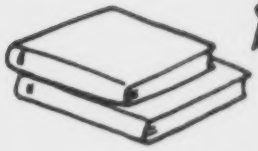
READING LOG
This is a log that will be utilized within the classroom only. The purpose of this log is for your child to keep track of the books that have been read within their level. I will be looking at this log to see the number of books your child has been reading during classroom silent reading time. This is one of many factors that will allow your child to advance to the next reading level.

DIFFERENTIATED BOOK REPORTS
Your child will be required to complete and turn in two book reports a month. These book reports will be completed during the school day within the classroom. I have chosen to use four different book report formats. These book reports get increasingly more difficult as your child progresses through the levels of books. This allows for differentiation among the students.

Thank you in advance for your support. Together, with the use of these strategies, we can help your child to become a lifelong fluent reader.

Appendix J

Reading Log



MY READING LOG

Name_____

Date	Title/Author